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# **The Feminization of Fame from Rousseau to de Staël**

**by**

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of Doctor of Philosophy in English

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**For my parents, Siân and Paul, and my sister, Helen**

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	1
Chapter I: A ‘New Sort of Glory’: Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ‘little philosophical chemistry and the Reach of Rousseauvian Fame in Britain, 1750-1823	19
Chapter II: Catharine Macaulay: ‘triumph[ant], when alive, o’er future fate’	65
Chapter III: Mary Robinson and the ‘splendour of a name’	103
Chapter IV: Inflating Frances Burney	143
Chapter V: Germaine de Staël: ‘When one can no longer find peace of mind in obscurity, it is necessary to look for strength in celebrity’	180
Afterword	223
Notes	226
Bibliography	259



## **Illustrations**

	between pages
I Charles Bour, <u>L'Hermitage de J.J. Rousseau</u> (1780s), from Hippolyte Buffenoir, <u>Les Portraits de Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Étude Historique et Iconographique. Souvenirs – Documents – Témoignages</u> , I (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913).	42-43
II <u>The Statue of Mrs Macaulay erected in the Church of St Stephen Walbrook, London, in Lady's Magazine</u> , VIII (October 1777). The British Library.	93-94
III Richard Samuel, <u>The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain</u> . Oil on canvas, 132.1 cm by 154.9 cm. Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1779. National Portrait Gallery, London.	95-96
IV Frontispiece to Catharine Macaulay, <u>The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line</u> , III (London: E. and C.Dilly, 1767).	97-98
V <u>The new Vis-à-vis, or Florizel driving Perdita</u> , <u>Rambler's Magazine</u> , I (August 1783). The British Library.	127-128
VI T.Colley, <u>Perdito and Perdita – or – the Man &amp; Woman of the People</u> , (17 December 1782). The British Museum.	127-128
VII Thomas Gainsborough, <u>Mrs Mary Robinson</u> (1781). Oil on canvas, 233.7 cm by 153 cm. The Wallace Collection, London.	128-129
VIII Sir Joshua Reynolds, <u>Mrs Robinson</u> (1784). Oil on canvas, 76 cm by 63 cm. The Wallace Collection, London.	128-129
IX <u>Mrs Robinson</u> , from <u>Public Characters 1800-1801</u> (London: R.Phillips, 1801).	141-142

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I dedicate this thesis to my family, for absolutely everything.

## **Declaration**

All material contained within this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Parts of Chapter III have been published as “Then smile and know thyself supremely great”: Mary Robinson and the “splendour of name”, Women’s Writing, 9.1 (2002), 107-24. Parts of Chapter I will appear as “A New Sort of Glory”: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with “a little philosophical chemistry”, in Philip Cox, Amanda Gilroy and Mary Peace, eds., Reading Publics: Print Culture 1750-1850 (forthcoming).

## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to address the literary, cultural and historical questions surrounding what I will suggest was the reconceptualization of fame in the second half of the eighteenth and the first two decades of the nineteenth centuries. The only previous analyses of celebrity in this period by Leo Braudy and by Frank Donoghue have claimed categorically that even though a democratization of fame occurred in this period, only men had sufficient access to the fame machine and thus to the experience of the frenzy of renown. While I agree that this period witnessed the birth of modern concepts of celebrity, I will suggest that a modernization necessarily entailed a feminization of fame.

Traditionally, heroic self-sacrifice had led to assured immortality, but with the rapidly expanding print culture of this period, celebrity was often instantaneous, achieved during a lifetime rather than a lifetime achievement. With the dissemination of the media, the rise of newspapers and periodicals and thus, most importantly, the increasing visibility of the celebrity as a person to be admired and emulated came the means to seduce an eager audience by manipulating one's career or personal image. Opening with an examination of the confessional politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who sought and found a desiring audience for his outpouring of private sensibility and thus initiated a discourse of fame which no longer relied upon the classical stoicism apparent since Ancient Rome, I will investigate how women writers not only 'puffed' themselves in the press, but actively engaged in constructing distinct authorial personae in and through their writings. Far from cowering anonymously in the shades, women writers were actively seeking and achieving the limelight, attaining a level of cultural centrality previously thought by critics such as Braudy and Donoghue to be unattainable. Embracing the public and publicity itself, they took advantage of the shifting mechanics of celebrity to place their writings and, ultimately, themselves, on the rostrum, more than eager to gain literary laurels.



## **Introduction**

Fame is fickle, flirtatious, and eternally female. The famed are always men; women have been relegated to occasional footnotes in the history of fame. This thesis intends to redress the balance by examining a particular cultural moment, from the mid eighteenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth century, when women embraced the limelight and fame as a concept underwent an irreversible process of feminization. In what has become known as the 'age of personality', fame was debated in theory, but also experimented with in practice, in full view of the public. Fame became something other than an exclusive and exclusionary bastion of the socially privileged in this period and became, to borrow the words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a form of celebrity which was 'more [one's] own', something to be achieved and enjoyed in a lifetime rather than as a lifetime achievement.<sup>1</sup>

It has become a frustrating critical commonplace to acknowledge this democratizing process only in relation to men.<sup>2</sup> While progress has been made in the study of eighteenth-century women's writing, there still remains an apparent barrier to allowing women their share of the limelight, even in cases where this was recognized by their contemporaries. In practice, women came increasingly to dominate a feminized literary culture, their civilized and civilizing influences providing the standard by which to judge cultural sophistication. Women have been described by critics largely as spectators of the new sorts of glory, shying away from the glare of publicity. Female sociability and social influence were perceived by eighteenth-century commentators as productive and thus progressive in the development of an enlightened and prosperous society, but women were also intimately and actively involved in the quest for literary laurels, and were celebrated for their achievements

by their contemporaries of both sexes. I want to readdress this critical marginalization of the famous female writer and suggest that women were actively embracing the new forms of public self-representation. The politics of fame shifted in the second half of the eighteenth century to allow not only a more democratic modernization of celebrity but also a feminization of a classical concept increasingly outmoded in a society driven by an obsession with instantaneous, multi-media forms of representation.

In Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820 Catherine Gallagher suggests that 'women, authorship, and the marketplace had – literally – *nothing* in common', that 'nothingness and disembodiment' defined female authorship during this period.<sup>3</sup> For Gallagher, women writers divorced their authorial from their personal identities, for propriety's sake, becoming 'nobody' in the literary marketplace. This thesis argues, by contrast that, far from accomplishing vanishing acts women were actively promoting named public presence. As Mary Scott claimed in The Female Advocate of 1774, statistics bore this out and 'Female Authors have appeared with honour, in almost every walk of literature'.<sup>4</sup> By the 1790s, women were more likely to put their name on the title page of their productions than men and, as Carla Hesse has shown in a study of female literary presence in France: 'When women, like men, chose to publish their writings, no law compelled them to identify themselves – but they did. They were not compelled to use a given legal name, or the same name on all their publications, [. . .] but a great many of them did'.<sup>5</sup> Realizing the necessity for self-exposure in a society obsessed with celebrity, women skilfully managed their public images, marshalling the expanding print culture to their advantage and mounting a successful challenge for literary laurels. Indeed, as Mary Seymour Montague contended in her Original Essay on Woman, to achieve renown, men now even had to '[d]eny the Truth, and meanly

filch [female] Fame'.<sup>6</sup>

### **i. Posthumous Passing**

From ancient times fame had been associated exclusively with the masculine heroic, with military or political martyrdom for a greater cause. In the first decades of the eighteenth century the value of fame to be achieved only as posthumous reward was already undergoing close scrutiny, sometimes in the most unlikely of locations. The Marchioness de Lambert's Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter (1727) makes some intriguing points about the reputations of women:

The virtues that make a figure in the world do not fall to the women's share; there [sic.] virtues are of a simple and peaceable nature: Fame will have nothing to do with us. 'Twas a saying of one of the Ancients, that the 'greatest virtues are for the men' he allows the women nothing but the single merit of being unknown; and 'such as are most praised, (says he) are not always the persons that deserve it best; but rather such as are not talked of at all'. This notion seems to me to be wrong; but to reduce this maxim into practice, I think it best to avoid the world, and making a figure, which always strikes at modesty, and be contented with being one's own spectator.<sup>7</sup>

Advocating the public promotion of female accomplishment de Lambert laments an antiquated, misogynist theory of fame which excludes women as undeserving nobodies. Invisible, because lacking in heroic qualities, women must remain content with an unpublished reputation. While de Lambert appears to concur with the introspective, retired female lot, she hints at the possibility of future change. By implying that fame 'will have nothing to do with' the feminine de Lambert suggests that an active engagement with this passive 'virtue' may easily alter the situation, redirecting the course of female celebrity. Deeming the current state of affairs undesirable de Lambert points to a future in which 'striking' the world, making a



‘figure’, and attracting attention to oneself might become a distinct possibility for women. It is the realization of this ‘notion’ that this analysis will explore.

Exclusive and exclusionary, classical forms of glory involved public action, and personal fame was achieved often through self-abnegation for the good of the nation. Self-sacrifice to gain an uncertain future renown or to obtain the ultimate reward from God in Heaven was complemented, in this period, by more enticing models of self-glorification. In 1709 and 1711 in the Tatler and the Spectator, two of the most popular literary journals of the eighteenth century, Joseph Addison debated issues about fame and the famous which would preoccupy many essays over the next century. In the Tatler article Addison drew attention to two unequal kinds of fame: ‘that which the Soul really enjoys after this Life, and that imaginary Existence by which Men live in their Fame and Reputation’.<sup>8</sup> Fame on earth, among one’s contemporaries, is depicted here as illusory when set against the greater achievement of God-given glory after death. Addison proceeded to detail a dream where he joins the famous on the paths to immortality as they literally toil to climb the mountain to renown, enticed by the ‘Call of Heavenly Musick’ (p.15). Inside the ‘Palace’ at the summit of the mountain Addison is joined by his fellow fame-seekers, who, tellingly, are no longer heroic warriors, but artists, scientists, explorers, who seem far to outnumber the former: ‘Several had their Swords drawn, some carried Rolls of Paper in their Hands, some had Compasses, other Quadrants, others Telescopes, and others Pencils; some had Lawrels on their Heads, and others Buskins on their Legs: In short, there was scarce any Instrument of a Mechanick Art or Liberal Science, which was not made use of on this Occasion’ (p.15). Even the exalted statesmen and soldiers are accompanied by ‘a Band of Historians’ who eloquently extol the magnificent deeds of the silent heroes (p.17). Hearing his own name proposed and then amusingly rejected



in favour of the mythical Robin Hood, Addison awakes from his dream to the thoughts of celebrated contemporaries, feeling it an 'agreeable Change to have my Thoughts diverted from the greatest among the Dead and Fabulous Heroes, to the most Famous among the Real and the Living' (p.21).

Addison's Tatler dream opens up a number of questions about the changing nature of fame in the eighteenth century. There seems to be no exclusive hierarchy in this Palace of Fame; inventors, explorers, and writers are admitted alongside emperors and statesmen. Illustrious warriors are furthermore unable to represent themselves in Addison's early-eighteenth century vision of a gathering of the famous, where writers bid for a celebrated status of their own by detailing the lives of the dead. Although Addison was later lauded throughout the eighteenth century for his play about classical heroism, Cato (1713), here he offers a different perspective. Far from entranced by classical heroes, Addison prefers to contemplate those celebrated in his present, who, through propinquity, seem to offer him a greater sense of achievable reality. In three consecutive articles for the Spectator two years later, Addison addressed the relative benefits of fame achieved during one's lifetime in relation to fame conferred after death by God. The essays turn on one issue: the happiness to be gained from celebrity status. Mistrusting the judgments of contemporaries Addison puts faith in the omnipotence of God to reward the worthy, who may not be recognized on earth. Despite earlier comments in the Tatler Addison still seems to question a system of glorification based upon social exclusivity, upon factors which render 'Fame a Thing difficult to be obtained by all'.<sup>9</sup> Easily won, but just as easily lost, reputation can be guaranteed and obtained passively, without struggle, for all deserving of distinction only by the grace of God. Heaven provides a veritable republic of fame for Addison, one which, as yet, he cannot envisage on earth. There

is a powerful sense in this collection of articles by Addison, however, that if one's contemporaries could learn to 'look upon the Soul' through more than 'outward Actions', to value the true self, then fame could be achieved in the present, 'the Goodness of our Actions' balanced by the 'Sincerity of our Intentions'.<sup>10</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century the classical notion of posthumous reward was becoming increasingly open to question. Why project oneself into a future which might never recognize the importance of one's actions, when contemporaries were ready and able to applaud deeds which would have more impact upon them than upon any unborn ancestors? As Adam Smith observed in The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) there was very little difference between anticipating a 'renown which [one] could no longer enjoy' and approbation 'never to be bestowed'.<sup>11</sup> Over half a century after Smith's comments, Lord Byron would make similar pronouncements in Don Juan on the essentially self-defeating objectives of posthumous renown:

[. . .] some persons plead  
 In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,  
 In the faith of their procreative creed,  
 Baptize Posterity, or future clay, -  
 To me seems but a dubious kind of reed  
 To lean on for support in any way;  
 Since odds are that Posterity will know  
 No more of them, than they of her, I trow.<sup>12</sup>

Although exciting and reckless, this sense of *carpe diem* seemed paradoxically to guarantee a stable, manageable public image within one's lifetime. This model of celebrity intrigued and enticed Byron's late eighteenth-century predecessors and contemporaries and spurred them on to seek for laurels. The glory of military success was similarly seen as exclusive and hierarchical, the increasing democratization of society rendering these concepts irrelevant to modern mores. As Thomas Martyn suggested in Dissertations upon the Aeneids (1760):

The lives and actions of illustrious warriors and statesmen have ever

been esteemed worthy the attention of the public: but this age has been the first to enter the more private walks of life, to contemplate merit in the shades, and to admire the more silent virtues. Dazzled with the glare of military talents, or caught up in the intricacies of state politics; the world seldom condescend to look upon literary accomplishments even of the highest order; but wholly disdained the study of common life, and those characters which it would be of the most general use to be acquainted with, because they lie the most open to imitation.<sup>13</sup>

Inaccessible and irrelevant, the hero of old is out of place in a society eager to embrace those who offer more quotidian, intimate forms of heroism. Private merges with public, the 'shades' become the limelight, the 'silent virtues' dazzling with their glare. Over the course of the period covered by this analysis, 'common life' would entrance; writers were to become the new heroes, women to embody the qualities requisite for celebrity.

In Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity Andrew Bennett examines the careers of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Byron. Bennett claims that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gave rise to the desire for a glorified posthumous reputation, one which would be encoded for future generations intimately within the neglected writer's text and which would pointedly ignore the possibilities offered by contemporary praise and mass market renown:

Once the conditions of publication and the market for books have given poetry audiences a certain anonymity, and once the democratisation of readership has allowed a certain degradation, and, by association, a *feminisation* of reading to become credible as a narrative of reception, then poets begin to figure reception in terms of an ideal audience – masculine, generalised, and anonymous – deferred to an unspecified future. Romanticism develops a theory of writing and reception which stresses the importance of the poet's originating subjectivity, and the work of art as an expression of self undermined by market forces, undiluted by appeals to the corrupt prejudices and desires of (bourgeois, contaminating, fallible, feminine, temporal, mortal) readers: the act of writing poetry becomes a self-governing and self-expressive practice.<sup>14</sup>



By contrast, he argues, female Romantic writers reacted against this supposedly predominant theory, providing ‘counter-discourses to the hegemony of (male) politics and as self-defensive strategies of self-effacement’, ‘infect[ing] and affect[ing] the dominant mode’.<sup>15</sup> As Bennett has asserted, however, it was the male Romantics who, unable to obtain satisfactory contemporary popularity and presence in the literary marketplace, sought refuge in the hope of future glory, remaining indifferent to fame in the present, not because they were created for infinitely higher goals, but because they could not gain adequate approval of their contemporaries.

Unable to adapt successfully to the dominant mode of approbation in the ‘age of personality’, it was the male Romantics who were compelled to respond to the feminization of fame with their own counter-discourse. Revealing intimate details of subjective experience to a sensitive, but judgmental, contemporary audience was to allow oneself to become as effeminate as one’s readers. To avoid the feminizing effects both of contemporary celebrity and approbation, they instigated a defence mechanism to re-masculinize fame as posthumous. An action which would justify their dissatisfaction with an audience of their peers, their disdain for the reading public. Reacting against the effects of contemporary celebrity, the male Romantics effectively revealed deep-seated fears about their inability to acclimatize to the demands of a more feminized form of fame.

## **ii. The Rise of the Literary Celebrity**

At the core of this investigation is the shift in authorial representation from a writer, patronized by the privileged and disinterested few, to an author gaining contemporary

fame by courting a vast reading public. This is not simply a study of reception, therefore, but an analysis of cultural and intellectual projection into the literary marketplace. An investigation into both how writers, including the five represented primarily here, were perceived both by their publics, but also how the author, in an ‘age of personality’, conducted a dialogue with such a widely divergent readership in a bid for fame. In Britain the first decade of the eighteenth century saw unprecedented authorial empowerment in law under the Statute of Queen Anne (1710). Here the author was recognized as the possible proprietor of a text with the resulting status as a legal entity, thus limiting the powers of the Stationer’s Company, the ancient guild of booksellers and printers in London. The move away from the tradition of authorial subservience to a patron to the professionalization of the writer in a competitive marketplace now began. After Alexander Pope successfully won his case against his publisher Edmund Curll, the author was further recognized in law as owning the copyright of his or her own correspondence. Victory to Pope, who, after having tricked Curll into publishing an unauthorized collection in the first place, could now retaliate with an ‘official’ edition of his own epistolary correspondence. The focus of attention was now upon the author rather than the bookseller, the latter seen as working as a representative of the former. This seismic shift in the position of the author in legal discourse was reciprocated by the increasing cultural centrality of the writer. Proprietary rights were now linked inextricably with a powerful presence in the public sphere, marking the transition between exclusively masculine classical models of fame and an increasingly feminized contemporary celebrity culture.<sup>16</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century, with the expansion of print culture, the authorial figure became recognizable, someone to be visibly admired as a distinct entity, as well as through their writings. Even the most notorious or revered writers

were largely unknown outside their writings before this time, praised or criticized, but essentially anonymous or invisible. For example, Eliza Haywood, one of the most popular and prolific writers of the first part of the eighteenth century, who produced approximately one novel every three months in the 1720s, remained an obscure, shady figure behind her amatory fiction. In her novels The Memoirs of the Baron de Bosse (1725) and Letters from the Palace of Fame (1727) Haywood engaged directly with the problems of literary fame. Although Haywood realized that her productivity rate was second to none she also lamented the ‘numerous Difficulties a Woman has to struggle through in her approach to Fame’:

If her Writings are considerable enough to make any Figure  
in the World, Envy pursues her with unweary'd Diligence;  
and if, on the contrary, she only writes what is forgot, as soon  
as read, Contempt is all the Reward, her wish to please, excites;  
and the cold Breath of Scorn chills the little Genius she has, and  
which, perhaps, cherished by Encouragement, might, in Time,  
grow to a Praise-worthy Height.<sup>17</sup>

To become a successful celebrity, claims Haywood, requires the intervention of an omnipotent other; there is no sense here that she ascribes renown to self-promotion. The intervention of something mystical and inexplicable also occupies the pages of her Letters from the Palace of Fame. Here the Goddess of Fame is unreliable, fickle and elusive: ‘success in everything is owing to the Stars, and even Fame herself is governed by them’.<sup>18</sup> Thus ‘swayed by the planets’ Fame is also a lying whore. While her voice is ‘Rapture’ and ‘Transport’, waywardly seducing the guests at the wedding of Ximene and Narzolphus with ‘Pleasure and Contentment’, she disguises the ‘Guilt’ of the bride with ‘the Paintings of Modesty’ and the ‘rage’ of her husband with ‘Joy’.<sup>19</sup> Unable to harness fame to her cause in her own literary life, Eliza Haywood failed even to keep her bookselling business afloat. Ironically situated at



the ‘Sign of Fame’ in Covent Garden, Haywood lasted less than a year at this location.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Samuel Richardson’s Pamela (1740-41) attracted and produced critical frenzy and massive reader response, but left the ‘editor’ Richardson in the shadow of his creations, as he was by those of his later works Clarissa (1747-48) and Sir Charles Grandison (1753-54).<sup>21</sup> With the 1760s and Laurence Sterne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the European-wide cult surrounding their novels Tristram Shandy and Julie; ou La Nouvelle Héloïse came a dramatic change, a deliberate authorial conflation of fictional character with writer in a bid for audience affection and empathy. Sterne even began to write to his admirers in the eccentric style of his character Tristram Shandy, presenting an enticing *mêlée* of author and creation to his public. By the late eighteenth century the public were eager to learn about the author’s private life, his or her relationships and modes of composition. Every book review in the late eighteenth-century publication, the European Magazine and London Review, for example, was followed by an ‘Author’s Note’, in which the reviewer drew the reader’s attention to the person outside the text.<sup>22</sup> Against the grain of contemporary critical theory, which refuses to contemplate the interrelationships between author and text, this thesis will argue that, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the authorial figure was, for the first time, integral to the reception of the writing, perceived as inextricably bound up with the creation process. As Mary Robinson stated in her essays on London for the Monthly Magazine; or, British Register of 1800: ‘The author breathes in his works – lives in their spirit’.<sup>23</sup> This is not to suggest an unsophisticated reading of texts in relation solely to their author’s lives, but to examine a cultural moment when the author was celebrated personally, both within and beyond their literary output, when, with the rise of biography and

biographical dictionaries, came the celebration of personal endeavours and exertions. As the new hero the author assumed a public responsibility to a readership eager to profit from example.

The powerful force of the imagination in empathizing with another was first theorized by Adam Smith in The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759). Finding the language which eluded Addison in 1711, when he lamented the inability of contemporaries to confer true fame upon the deserving, Smith theorized the peculiar phenomenon of the public's empathy with the famous, who are 'observed by all the world' for their 'movement and direction' (p.51). For the first time, due to the expansion of print culture, the public not only had access to information about their heroes and heroines but were often the means of maintaining their idol's celebrated status. With the decline of the patronage system, authors had access to a far greater readership, but one that sometimes seemed impossibly amorphous and anonymous. The writer had to maintain an equilibrium between flattery and condescension, between courting and alienating the mass of unknowns. As Smith suggested, the admiration of an audience had to be won through an irresistible *mêlée* of 'approbation heightened by wonder and surprise' (p.20):

A man is mortified when, after having endeavoured to divert the Company, he looks round and sees that nobody laughs at his jests but himself. On the contrary, the mirth of the company is highly agreeable to him, and he regards this correspondence of their sentiments with his own as the greatest applause (p.14).

With the increasing demands of an audience to be entertained by contemporary celebrities, fame-seekers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had to become skilled in a more instantaneous, spontaneous form of glory.



### iii. Puffing

The means to achieve contemporary celebrity were provided by a rapidly expanding print culture which encouraged the craze for publicity of all kinds.<sup>24</sup> Publicity is employed here in both its senses, as it was in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when it first entered the cultural lexicon in both Britain and France. An appearance in the public arena does not automatically suggest a mastery of the mechanics of self-promotion. To be thrust into the limelight, unwilling and unable to take advantage of this position, ensures that publicity is achieved in only one respect: that of a visible public image. By contrast, actively to capitalize upon one's place under the glare of media attention, to manipulate the forces of fame, becomes a new achievement in its own right. It is this latter form of publicity which will be investigated, in a cultural moment obsessed with the promotion of the self.

Publicity took many forms. With the dissemination of the media, the rise of newspapers and periodicals, and thus, most importantly, the increasing visibility of the celebrity as a person to be admired and emulated came the means to seduce an eager audience, by manipulating one's career or personal image. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's satirical play The Critic (1779) offers a unique insight into the workings of the late eighteenth-century 'fame machine'. Sheridan's play exposes the art of self-promotion through that 'Practitioner in Panegyric', that 'Professor of the Art of Puffing', Puff, who claims:

PUFFING is of various sorts – the principal are, the PUFF DIRECT – the PUFF PRELIMINARY – the PUFF COLLATERAL – the PUFF COLLUSIVE, and the PUFF OBLIQUE, or PUFF BY IMPLICATION. – These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of LETTER TO THE EDITOR – OCCASIONAL ANECDOTE – IMPARTIAL CRITIQUE – OBSERVATION FROM CORRESPONDENT, or ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE PARTY.<sup>25</sup>

As illustrated by The Critic, in the second half of the eighteenth century, manipulating the media to advance one's position, gain greater cultural currency, or attack opponents proves irresistible to the fame-seeker who has the luxurious choice of employing a professional publicist or actively engaging in his or her own self-promotion. With the increasing commodification of culture at this time, one could easily advertise material goods to buy or sell, but also promote oneself. Now, self-advertisement was all. By 1759 Samuel Johnson could point, not only to the obsession with publicity, but also to the increasing sophistication of the means of 'advertising [one's] own excellence'<sup>26</sup>: 'Whatever is common is despised. Advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it is, therefore, become necessary to gain attention by a magnificence of promises, and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic. [. . .] The trade of advertising is now so near to perfect, that it is not easy to propose any improvement'.<sup>27</sup> Detailed descriptions of the latest celebrity's accoutrements could boost the image of both manufacturer and manufactured. The latest dress, carriage, lover, puffed in advance, made the celebrity instantly recognizable to the public. Anyone could commission a portrait by the latest famous artist, provided they could pay the fees. Demand was so great for pictures of the latest star that engravers and miniaturists would often copy the portrait and introduce it into the print shops, even before the paint had dried on the canvas, ensuring a maximum audience for the renowned of the day. A face could easily be tracked on the metropolitan streets, and the most painted women of the day, like Mary Robinson or the Gunning sisters, would be besieged while leaving houses, shops, parties. As Horace Walpole noted: 'there are mobs at their doors to see them get into their chairs; and people go early to get places at the theatre when it is known that they will be there'.<sup>28</sup> The astonishing advancement of print culture in Britain was

endlessly remarked upon by European visitors. The German novelist Sophie von La Roche saw the British press as a provider and promoter of self-advancement:

At home we think we have done a great deal for the common man by inserting a modicum of good sense in the calendars, which are only issued to the people annually; but in England and in London there are 21 daily newspapers, containing news of foreign parts and states and excellent articles on all kinds of subjects, poetry, humorous and witty passages, satires and moral maxims, and historical and political essays in addition. I already mentioned the Ipswich paper at Mistress Norman's in Helveetsluys on that account, for this is only a provincial town, and yet so many ideas for one's enlightenment are contained in it.<sup>29</sup>

Whilst the press shaped and enlightened an eager audience, it also provided an enticing space for those seeking the limelight.

Within a cultural environment conducive to self-promotion, the writers discussed in this thesis capitalized upon the favourable climate to market themselves and their writings. Geographically, the celebrity could reach further than ever before, the republic of fame becoming genuinely cosmopolitan. All the writers discussed in the following chapters achieved fame outside their own countries, their works translated into many European languages, their names and images disseminated across a continent. Both Germaine de Staël and Mary Robinson were known in Russia, one of the most distant and exciting outposts of Europe. Catharine Macaulay was lauded in America, and Frances Burney's novels attracted imitators across Europe. The metaphorical presence of the author in the European marketplace was coupled with the literal circulation of the authorial self, as well as the willingness of admirers not only to correspond with their heroes but also to visit them and the places associated with their lives and works. Frances Burney visited British towns and found herself on a publicity tour, appearing in public for her admirers to stand and stare at the latest star novelist. Mary Robinson and Germaine de Staël, and especially the latter, travelled over Europe and were recognized wherever they stayed. The cult



surrounding Jean-Jacques Rousseau extended further than personal visits to the man himself and later to his shrine at Ermenonville. The places represented in his phenomenally successful bestseller La Nouvelle Héloïse were besieged post-publication with besotted admirers eager to see the revered 'classic ground', where, as the writer Helen Maria Williams put it in her A Tour in Switzerland, 'the one hundred sentimental pilgrims, [with] Heloise in hand, run over the rocks and mountains to catch the lover's inspiration'.<sup>30</sup> Instead of touring sites more usually associated with the great historical past, late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century travellers sought increasingly to visit the living monuments of the present for inspiration.

It is the remarkable inspiration provided by the life and writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau which opens this investigation into the feminization of fame. Rousseau's new sort of glory, an intoxicating combination of audience seduction and personal revelation, earned him a following of millions. Although supposedly, even on his own admission, a naïve recluse from the publicity-soaked literary culture of the second half of eighteenth-century Europe, Rousseau was more than willing to employ and exploit the opportunities offered by the expanding print culture. Presenting his very soul to the public Rousseau attempted to reveal his personal motivations and intimate actions. Empowering his audience, Jean-Jacques Rousseau re-created himself as a modern deity, encouraging a trend whereby gods could be worshipped into existence. Integrating writing with the private self, Rousseau put forward models of self-representation which were accommodating to women as well as men. In chapter II, I reassess the career of Catharine Macaulay, a woman whose rather colourful private life has always been divorced from her exceptionally successful career as the 'Celebrated Female Historian'. When her critics attacked her History of England for its strident republican politics, Macaulay responded vehemently in print

that they did not discourage her from her endeavours but justified her aims. Refusing to capitulate and temper her beliefs, Catharine Macaulay proceeded to justify the erection of a statue to her as a living monument.

Unquestionably one of the most famous women of the late eighteenth century, Mary Robinson, is discussed in chapter III. An actress who came to prominence after a much-publicized liaison with the young Prince of Wales, Robinson was dogged by scandal throughout her life. Robinson was put in print, painted and circulated as a permanent fixture in the press of the 1780s. But this is only one side of the story. Robinson was also a skilful journalist, taking advantage of her position as an insider in one of the most up and coming and lucrative professions, to analyse the celebrity culture of the day, and to offer a feminized figure of fame as the solution to the dilemmas of the woman writer. Addressing her loyal public Mary Robinson employed her unique position in print culture, recycling her own famous name to promote the causes of the female presence in the marketplace. Chapter IV takes a fresh look at the exceptionally lengthy career of the novelist Frances Burney, a writer who is regularly held up by modern critics as the epitome of female fear in the face of publicity. In this chapter I dispel the myths of Burney's authorial terrors to reveal a woman well-versed in the culture of her day, who managed to keep both fame and reputation intact by treading a fine line between the two. I conclude with Germaine de Staël, one of the most famous European writers and cultural theorists of the early nineteenth century. More than any other writer in this study de Staël thematized and theorized fame in her writings and concerned herself obsessively both in life and art with the cultural role of the famous female. De Staël's contribution to European literary culture was immense and with her career came the final acknowledgment that fame had, irreversibly, become a feminized concept. Women writers would no longer

be content to remain footnotes in the history of fame. From the latter half of the eighteenth century to the beginnings of the nineteenth century, from Rousseau to de Staël, women contended successfully for literary laurels, achieving a previously unimagined cultural centrality.

## Chapter I

### **'A New Sort of Glory': Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'little philosophical chemistry' and the Reach of Rousseauvian Fame in Britain, 1750-1823<sup>1</sup>**

In 1791, Edmund Burke published A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly,<sup>2</sup> a companion piece and sequel to Reflections on the Revolution in France. This analysis of French political affairs post-Revolution, however, quickly became noted for its vitriolic attack upon the pernicious influence and seductive sway of one famous man: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. According to Burke, the future of France would be jeopardized if the new republican leaders continued to worship Rousseau, 'their hero of vanity' and dispute tirelessly, like rivals in love, over 'which of them is the best resemblance of' their self-proclaimed deity (p.310; p.312). Although dead for well over a decade, Rousseau and his writings, claimed Burke, still throbbed passionately through the veins of his admirers, his 'blood' 'transfus[ing] into their minds and manners' (p.310). How could this obscure, 'insane Socrates' transfix not only an entire country but the European continent in the second half of the eighteenth century and beyond? Burke's analysis shrewdly pinpoints Rousseau's profound mastery of 'a new sort of glory', a celebrity based upon self-publicity, the bringing 'to light' of even one's 'most obscure and vulgar vices' (p.314). A fame which would alter the discourse and politics of heroism and destroy the exclusivity, the class-based and gendered hierarchies of ancient gallantry and spur even the lowly to seek for glory. As Burke feared, veneration for Jean-Jacques Rousseau could even threaten to replace the more traditional outlets for worship, ensuring that, while '[t]housands admire the sentimental writer; the affectionate father is hardly known in his



parish' (p.315).

It is not only the Rousseauvian phenomenon itself which effected cultural upheaval in Europe but also the profound impact of Jean-Jacques' mode of self-representation upon the ways in which the authorial figure manifested him or her self textually and culturally. Adopting and adapting the model of Rousseauvian fame writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries sought to make a name for themselves as new cultural heroes, tactically gaining public notice through an active generation of their own publicity. As Rousseau himself observed in the preface to the Neuchâtel edition of the Confessions, his 'celebrity' had been achieved not 'from rank or birth, but from another which is more my own'.<sup>2</sup> More than fifty years later, William Hazlitt in the Conversations of Northcote made an almost identical statement about the overpowering influence of Rousseau upon European society:

Till then, birth and wealth and power were all in all [. . .]. But with the increase and diffusion of knowledge, this state of things must sooner or later cease; and Rousseau was the first who held the torch (lighted at the never dying fire in his own bosom) to the hidden chambers of the mind of man - like another Prometheus, breathed into his nostrils the breath of a new and intellectual life, enraging the Gods of the earth, and made him feel what is due to himself and his fellows. Before, physical force was every thing: henceforward, mind, thought, feeling was a new element - a fourth estate in society.<sup>3</sup>

Here Hazlitt illuminates not only the political levelling encouraged by Jean-Jacques' passionately personal writings but also the combustible, inflammatory quality of Rousseauvian fame, which set the world ablaze, its citizens then burning to assert themselves and to shine brightly in society.

This fiery transferral of star-like quality has always been viewed by recent critics as failing to ignite the hearts and minds of British citizens. From the 1950s with Henri



Roddier's and Jacques Voisine's often overly narrative investigations of Rousseau's reception in Britain to Edward Duffy's rather stereotypical analysis of English response in 1979, Rousseau has been represented critically as having little effect upon the 'unassailable' sensibilities of the 'English'. It is only more recently with Gregory Dart's Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism (1999) that a more nuanced picture has emerged about Rousseau's textual reception in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Unlike Dart, however, who concentrates exclusively on the textual response of major Romantic writers to Rousseau's confessional politics, I focus here both on printed and private contemporary reactions, from reviewers and literary figures to the effects upon ordinary British men and women, in order to demonstrate the reach of Rousseauvian fame in a country supposedly hostile to Rousseau's personal and political revelations. From the increasingly feminized reaction to Rousseau on his visit to London in the 1760s, to the epistolary debate between Elizabeth Carter and Elizabeth Montagu about the Confessions in the 1780s, to Lady Caroline Lamb's exploration of Regency celebrity culture in Glenarvon (1816) and William Hazlitt's complex and challenging response to Rousseau's writing on artists and heroes in Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion and Characteristics (both 1823), I will suggest that an alternative history of the reception of Rousseau and his writings in British literature and culture can be rediscovered. Identifying with forms of Rousseauvian self-presentation allowed these men and women to realize a 'new sort of glory' and afforded them a new kind of subjectivity from which to express themselves publicly and relate in new ways to their audience. For women especially Jean-Jacques' feminized persona offered a starting point from which to develop self-assertion and achieve literary recognition.

### i. A New Sort of Hero

The inclusion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in an extended analysis primarily concerned with female literary celebrity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may at first seem anomalous. A notoriously reclusive, paranoid primitivist who not only appeared to despise the self-promoting aspects of European society, but deplored female publicity, Rousseau is not an obvious aid to female self-expression. I will argue, however, that Rousseau can be credited with both of my assertions. Far from the naïve, easily-led social innocent, out of place in the ruthless print culture of the eighteenth century, Rousseau not only recognized the changing mechanics of fame, but actively generated his own publicity, in turn encouraging new modes of self-representation in both men and women. Deeply located in the 'fires' of one's own being, within the person of the author, Rousseauvian fame redistributed glory, offering a feminized form of heroism and a means to control the emotions of an audience enthralled, as Burke lamented in A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly, to the powers of the newly seductive celebrity.

Rousseau's concern with fame was apparent from his earliest works. The rarely examined Discours sur la Vertu du Héros, written in 1751 in response to a question proposed by the Academy of Corsica, but never submitted, analyses and updates the qualities required for heroism. To become a modern hero, Rousseau suggests, entails far more than simply strength and valour; elements of self-exertion and self-publicity are also indispensable: the hero 'the work of nature, fortune and himself' (OC II, p.1262). 'Public happiness' takes on a dual meaning in this Discours. Suggesting cynically that

'personal glory' is nearly always the goal of a hero's feats, Rousseau adds a more contemporary slant on the reaction of the public, whose 'happiness' results primarily from the hero's necessary possession of 'the great art of subjugating the hearts and capturing the admiration of the People' (p.1265). The redeployment of military terms here is noticeably and cleverly twisted within the sentence. For, in a less warlike society, heroes of an ancient mould are rare specimens and thus 'outside combat, valour is nothing. The brave man proves himself only on days of battle; the true hero proves himself everyday' (p.1266). According to Rousseau, 'fortitude is the true foundation of heroism' (p.1272) and 'greatness' achieved through 'self-mastery', for 'the most redoubtable enemies are within ourselves; and whoever knows how to fight and vanquish them will have done more for glory, in the judgment of the Wise, than if he had conquered the Universe' (p.1273). 'It is not only by their exploits that the reputation of great men is measured' (p.1267), but through a powerful combination of control not only over oneself, but a masterly grasp of one's audience: one no longer had to die on the battlefield to achieve glory. Refashioning the classical and military ideal of fame, Rousseau offers a model of renown available for the ordinary citizen of quotidian eighteenth-century Europe. Although he refers to great men in his Discours, it is telling that the system of heroism he proposes is feminized, relying neither on physical strength nor military prowess.

It will be argued, though, that Rousseau's philosophical position is founded upon the notion that inequality results from the moment one becomes aware of one's relation with others, when the self-preservation of *amour de soi* becomes the concern for reputation instigated by *amour propre*.<sup>5</sup> In the Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes (1755), Rousseau depicts the progression of society beyond the



acquisition of property and the 'frenzy of renown' as twin evils (OC III, p.189). Whereas Savage Man is insular, concerned only with his 'present existence, without any idea of the future' (p.144), Civilized Man

began to look at others and desire to be looked at himself, and public esteem gained a price. The best singer or dancer; the handsomest, the strongest, the most skilful, the most eloquent became the most highly regarded, and this was the first step towards both inequality and vice (pp.169-70).

With a desire to compete came a paradoxical shift in focus for expression of the self: 'the Savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, only knows how to live in the opinion of others, and it is solely from the judgment of others, so to speak, that he draws the sentiment of his own existence' (p.193). Yet the more positive elements of Rousseau's theories of the self are often critically overlooked, ignoring the tempered, but still apparent, benefits of the fame game. While the 'universal desire for reputation, honours and preferment, which devours us all' brings out the 'worst' in civilized people, it also brings about the 'best', virtues as well as vices (p.189).

In other writings, however, Rousseau presents a more appealing image of the 'frenzy for renown'. In both the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts (1751) and the 'Preface' to the drama Narcisse (1752), Rousseau combines the heroic self-regard illustrated in the Discours sur la Vertu des Héros with the redirection of amour-propre for virtuous self-advancement. In the first Discours Rousseau claims that '[e]very Artist desires to be applauded', citing 'the praise of one's contemporaries' as the 'most precious reward' (OC III, p.21). Even the wise are 'not insensible to glory', but, like Rousseau, lament the distribution of honours to the unworthy: 'when he sees [fortune] so badly distributed, his virtue, which a little emulation would have animated and rendered socially advantageous,

languishes, and dies in misery and oblivion' (p.26). Returning to the self and valuing that self can effect a quiet revolution in the name of fame. Self-glorification can become far more powerful than a reliance upon the fickle social establishment, as equally provocative as an active courting of public opinion: 'What is the good of searching for our happiness in the opinion of others if we can find it within ourselves?' (p.30). Rousseau's principle of 'singularity' to achieve fame here receives its first public airing. In the 'Preface' to Narcisse Rousseau reiterates his control of the fame machine, denying his celebrated name is due in any way to the more usual means of obsequious flattery or rivalry:

If they ever see that I begin to canvass public approval, or that I derive vanity from the composition of pretty songs, or that I blush to have written bad comedies, or that I seek to injure the fame of my rivals, or that I affect to speak ill of the great men of the day in order to raise myself to their level and lower them to my own, or that I aspire to positions in Academies, or that I pay court to women of the ton, or that I shower praise upon the stupidity of the Great, or that, no longer wishing to live by the work of my hands, I become contemptuous of my chosen employment and set off in quest of fortune, in a word, if they notice that love of reputation causes me to forget that of virtue, I beg them to warn me, even publicly, and I promise instantly to consign my writings and books to the flames (OC II, p.974).

It is noticeable that here Rousseau does not reject 'love of reputation', but instead suggests that his reasons for success are due to an ingenious mixture of virtue and desire for recognition. If one topples the other in his affection, however, destruction will ensue, so maintaining an equilibrium is essential. Keeping a tight hold on the distribution of his image, flattering an audience, but not in a sycophantic manner, Rousseau maintains a dialogue with the public, simultaneously and carefully guarding the self-imposed barriers of his *amour propre*.

## ii. The Art of Reader Seduction

How could an artist who seemed to shun publicity become the most famous man in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century and beyond? Much has been written on how Rousseau's 1761 novel Julie; ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse sent a whole continent into a frenzy over the deceptively simple tale of les Deux Amants, Habitans d'une Petite Ville au Pied des Alpes.<sup>6</sup> Very little has been written about Rousseau's own textual and extra-textual contributions to the phenomenon his writings became, events which essentially redirected the focus of literary celebrity from the text, the event, to the actual person of the author, the new hero.<sup>7</sup> Now authors bore responsibility for the glory or failure of their works: 'nothing could be gained from burning books, it was the authors that needed burning' (OC I, p.576). As Rousseau acknowledges himself in the Confessions, once a name has been established, it can be capitalized upon to the advantage of an author. In an ironic understatement Rousseau reveals his profound awareness of the means to achieve self-publicity: 'I judged that a copyist of some literary celebrity would probably not lack work' (OC I, p.363).

As early as the 1740s, in 'Idée de la Methode dans la Composition d'un Livre' (c.1745), Rousseau was suggesting how a new sort of glory could contribute to the cultural elevation of an author. Putting forward a manifesto explaining the novel art of reader seduction, he claims that once an idea has been formulated, 'it is only a question of expanding and arranging it via the best method to convince and to please'. And it is 'this part, as well as the style, which usually holds the key to the success of the work and the reputation of the Author' (OC II, p.1242). To achieve literary glory, one must lure the



audience like a siren, not only to achieve promotion of the work, but to confer celebrity upon the attractively appealing authorial figure. The subtlety of textual seduction here ensures that an author need not, from the outset, engage in the public flattery so despised by Rousseau in the 'Preface' to Narcisse. Sustaining readerly devotion need only entail maintaining an alluringly visible persona behind the work, deftly focusing the reader's attentions and desires upon the author rather than the text:

[W]hen this is done well, it predisposes the reader favourably towards you, he sees from the outset an educated man, who does not embrace an opinion because he is ignorant of the arguments supported by the opposite party, an upright and sincere man who does not disguise from his readers, through underhand tactics, his opponent's arguments (p.1243).

It is this paradoxically honest sleight-of-hand that Adam Smith in the 1755 'Letter to the Editors of the Edinburgh Review' labelled 'a little philosophical chemistry', drawing attention not only to Rousseau's experiments in reader ravishing, but also his masterly control of the elements of public reputation.

Although initially critical of public promotion in the 'Preface' to Narcisse Rousseau was certainly not averse to marketing his own texts, provided he kept control of the situation and preferably read from his own text. This effectively ensured that the reader (or more often the auditor) was indelibly impressed with Jean-Jacques himself, unable to distinguish the textual from the physical presence of the author. Books X and XI of the Confessions detail reader reaction to La Nouvelle Héloïse, but most tellingly, draw attention to Rousseau's own interventions in the creation of his legendary image. Offering pre-publication highlights to Madame de Luxembourg, Rousseau deftly selected parts of the novel most likely to entrance. His calculations were amply rewarded:

I read by her bedside, and tightly controlled my readings [. . .]. The success of this expedient surpassed my expectation. [She] was infatuated with Julie and her Author; she talked only of me, interested herself in nothing but me, said sweet things to me all the time, kissed me ten times a day. She wanted me always to sit next to her at table, and when several nobles desired to take this place, she told them it was mine and had to put them elsewhere (OC II, pp.522-23).

Notice that the effect of the author-text combination focuses excessive, obsessive attention only on the author: Julie is almost forgotten. De Luxembourg's besotted behaviour even places Jean-Jacques literally and metaphorically above the aristocracy: a vivid example of triumphing over the aristocratic domination of the fame game. Harnessing the publicity of the private salons of Paris to his own advantage, Rousseau marketed his novel in such a way as to attract attention to himself, ensuring that the text acted as an extension of the author's sexual being: 'women especially were intoxicated with the Book and with its author' (p.545). Revelling in his eminently desirable person, Rousseau claims that textual seduction inevitably substituted for voracious sexual attraction: 'there were few, even of the highest ranks, whose conquest I could not have made, if I had embarked upon it' (p.545).<sup>8</sup> To compound the frenzied fascination with the illustrious Jean-Jacques, Rousseau indulged in a coy publicity stunt:

What made women so favourable to me was their conviction that I had written my own story and that I myself was the Hero of the novel. [. . .] Everyone was persuaded that no one could have written about such amorous transports who had not experienced them in his own heart. [. . .] Except for a few youthful memories and Mme d'Houdetot, the loves I had felt and described were only with the Sylphides. I wanted neither to confirm nor destroy a mistake so advantageous to me. [. . .] I left the public in suspense on this matter. Rigid moralists claim that I should have frankly declared the truth. As for me, I do not see why I should, and I believe that there would have been more stupidity than candour in a declaration made unnecessarily (p.548).



Allowing his curious readers only the bare essentials, Rousseau remained tantalizingly enigmatic and teasing about biographical details. This mischievous mixture of half-truths and semi-revelations could only increase the infatuation with an author employing seduction techniques more conventionally labelled feminine. Further promises of the exposure of the life of the famous Jean-Jacques drove his audience wild. It seems that Rousseau was only too willing to drop hints about his forthcoming publications, creating massive hype and expectation. When visiting Britain in 1766, the Scottish philosopher David Hume recorded a conversation with Rousseau on this subject. In a letter to the Comtesse du Boufflers-Rouverel Hume claimed that '[he] had exhorted him on the road [to London] to write his Memoirs. He told me, that he had already done it with an intention of publishing them'.<sup>9</sup> But the most provocative means of self-publicity came in 1770-1771 when Rousseau again specifically selected an audience of friends and influential Parisian figures to leak parts of his autobiography, flirtatiously releasing episodes likely to elicit the most profound reactions. From reactions as polar as uncontrollable tears to preventative police intervention, Rousseau's revelations certainly created controversy. Of course, the audience lost not a moment in making their privileged information public. Jean-Joseph Dusaulx's version of events is especially pertinent to a discussion of the mechanics of literary fame. Enveloping his audience in an atmosphere of expectation, Dusaulx records sarcastically that 'Rousseau's voice did not falter for a single moment: his strength sustained and replenished by his great interest in celebrity' (OC 1, n.iv, p.1613). Although recognizing Rousseau's effective manipulation of himself and the other members of the audience, Dusaulx cannot resist remembering how excited, 'how happy they were all to be there' in the presence of the great Jean-

Jacques (n.iv, p.1613).

The most impassioned response to Rousseau's assault upon the senses of his handpicked pre-publication audience comes from Claude-Joseph Dorat. The often incredible reaction to Jean-Jacques from men is often underplayed, as critics concentrate upon female hysterics over the most renowned man in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Returning home after an exhausting eight-hour session with the confessional Jean-Jacques, Dorat enthuses: 'What a work! [. . .] He avowed his good qualities with noble pride, and his flaws with an even more noble frankness. [. . .] I cried my heart out' (n.iv, p.1612). In line with Burke's depiction of the squabbling would-be Jean-Jacques' of the National Assembly and with the decline of a traditional system of heroism based on warrior-like combat illustrated in Rousseau's own Discours sur la Vertu des Héros, Rousseau seems to fill a gap for men searching for contemporary role-models. With the advent of a more accessible, attainable form of glory came a simultaneous feminization of audience reaction, as the eminent man of feeling Dorat so ably demonstrated. Yet this response is by no means restricted to 'effeminate' Frenchmen. Since Richardson had released Sir Charles Grandison on the British public in 1753-1754 as a counterpart to his virtuous heroines Pamela and Clarissa, literature had been intimately concerned with male conduct and the appropriateness of manly feeling and male sensibility. A survey of British male correspondence concerning Jean-Jacques reveals an often surprising level of excitement where this new kind of hero was concerned. Men saturated in the literary cult of the Man of Feeling explored their own emotions towards and in the presence of the gloriously sentimental author of La Nouvelle Héloïse. Far from remaining insensible to Rousseauvian charm, British men record symptoms as feverish and fiery as any Frenchman.

It is the physicality of male reaction to Jean-Jacques Rousseau - the inextricability of man and works for these men - that provides the most telling evidence of his alluring ability to seduce both sexes. Rousseau was simultaneously shocked and delighted by the extent to which many of his admirers would go to visit the man himself. As stated in the Confessions Rousseau's declared choice of personal obscurity only increased the desire of his followers to seek him out: 'The way of life I had taken up aroused curiosity' (p.367). It seems that Rousseau had become as popular a sight on Grand Tours and trips abroad as the more usual architectural and historical European wonders. Certainly, in December 1764, no mountain was too high for the young James Boswell to climb to catch a glimpse of his hero: 'I passed the Mountain Lepidosa which is monstrously steep & in a great measure covered with snow. I was going to Rousseau which consideration levelled the roughest mountains' (CC XXII, p.359).<sup>11</sup> Gaining admittance to Rousseau by presenting him with his own revealing memoir, Boswell's expectations are infectious: 'I recalled all my former ideas of J-J Rousseau, the admiration with which he is regarded all over Europe, his Héloïse, his Emile. [. . .] My fancy formed many a Portrait of the wild Philosopher. At length his door opened & I beheld him' (p.353). Rousseau and Boswell discuss the trials and tribulations of being famous, Jean-Jacques claiming how 'crippled' he is with and by visitors and inundated with letters from admirers, each of whom believing they are the one and 'Only'. Insight into the process of contemporary fame is here compounded by Boswell's repetition of exactly this belief that he has become the best friend of the celebrated Jean-Jacques:

Since I left England I have not had any body to whom I could lay open entirely my mind till I had found M.Rousseau. [. . .] Gods! Am I now real[l]y the freind [*sic.*] of Rousseau? What a rich assemblage of ideas! [. . .] I supposed a parcel of young fellows saying, 'Come,



Boswell, you'll dine with us today?' 'No, Gentlemen, excuse me; I'm engaged. I dine today with Rousseau'. My tone, my air, my native Pride when I pronounced this! (pp.361-62)

The powerful role of the imagination in the construction of the pact between famous person and admirer is here much in evidence; for Boswell, supposition is supplanted by the concreteness of his final sentence. Rousseau's ability to make his auditor feel uniquely special and Boswell's willing seduction combine to result in a deeply flattering relationship for both. As Boswell relates upon leaving: 'M.Rousseau embraced me. He was quite St Preux Attendri. He kist me several times, & held me in his arms with elegant cordiality. O! I shall never forget that I have been thus' (p.365).

Boswell later took his position as Julie as far as he dared. By sleeping with his idol's mistress, Thérèse Levasseur, Boswell achieved sexual contact with Rousseau by proxy. It is noticeable that in the portion of his diary that was not consigned to the flames, Boswell's concern is always for his hero, his treatment of mistress enhanced by desire for master: 'Night was manly, [. . .] talked much of Rousseau. [. . .] [D]one it once: 13 in all. Was really affectionate to her' (CC XXVIII, p.347). Other admirers did not take their adoration for their favourite star quite so far, but the sense of an almost sexual desire or fulfilment in either hearing about or even being introduced to Rousseau is often overwhelming in recorded male responses. In August 1776, two years before Rousseau's death, Thomas Bentley recorded an encounter with Jean-Jacques that led to some quite alarming symptoms:

There was something so friendly and so earnest in his looks and manner when he said he would be glad to see me again, that I felt very foolish; something was the matter with my eyes, that I could not very well see how I got through his little antechamber to the stairs, and I quite forgot to take leave of Mme Rousseau (CC XXXIX, p.262).

Meeting his hero leaves Bentley losing control of his faculties, becoming misty-eyed and weak at the knees. The young Robert Liston, a 'great admirer of Rousseau' wrote excitedly to his sister Henrietta about unexpectedly happening upon Jean-Jacques in Paris in January 1766. Liston comically tracks the 'great m[a]n', spending 'an hour or two in a Coffee-House opposite' his hotel in high hopes of being able 'to stare at [Rousseau] and David [Hume]' as they were leaving for London. Caught in the act by Hume, Liston asks to be left to 'stare in full liberty', but is 'pulled [. . .] by the arm' to meet the 'famous personage'. Liston's assertion that he 'can't enter into the particulars of [their] conversation' suggests that he was probably struck dumb when actually confronted with his hero. To regain chivalrous credibility, Liston feminizes Rousseau, snatching at 'the Honour to help him into the Chaise' (CC XXVIII, pp.187-88).

It was not only excitable young men who were infatuated with Jean-Jacques. Even professionals and academics could barely restrain their feelings for their idol. Dr John Gregory, later author of the female conduct book A Father's Legacy to His Daughters (1774), wrote to Rousseau in February 1766, sending him a gift of his latest work, A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man (1766), which he claims is deeply influenced by the man he 'admires and loves' (p.253). In letters to his friend David Hume, Hugh Blair of the University of Edinburgh professed a desire to know the truth about the background to Julie; ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse as profound as any Parisian woman of the *ton*:

I never felt my Self, so impress'd and affected by any thing I ever read, as by some parts of that Book. I Reverence Rousseau more for that than for any other of his other Productions. You would do me a great favour if you would Enquire of him, or if you know already would inform me whether or not there be not foundation in his own History for some of the capital Scenes & adventures of the Heloise. I have



always had a Notion there was; I hardly believe it possible for any man to describe & relate So ardently without some foundation in fact. [. . .] I have long been curious to know it (p.316).

Clergyman Richard Hurd wrote to William Warburton about his fixation with the writings of Rousseau in 1761, after having read La Nouvelle Héloïse for the first time. His reading encouraged an insatiable thirst for information about the author. 'Pick up what you can in relation to his history, situation, & private morals', Hurd urged Warburton, 'I have an extreme curiosity to be better acquainted with him'. More extraordinary is his excessive defence of the book and its author, chivalrously even cutting ties with and almost issuing challenges to close friends who 'speak ill' of either: 'The man who does not approve the N.Héloise, can't evidently be approved by me. & I have accordingly required Mr Balguy [. . .] to retract his opinion of it, on the pain of my utmost displeasure' (CC VIII, p.356). Hardly the reaction of stoic indifference. Rousseau and his writings provoked British men to respond passionately in print and even in the presence of their unlikely new hero.

### **iii. Public Appearances: Jean-Jacques à Londres**

Frenzy reached fever pitch in London in 1766 with the impending visit of the famous Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Newspapers and periodicals enthused about the writer whom they barely mentioned without an attachment of the word 'celebrated'. As the Public Advertiser of 13 January 1766 claimed enthusiastically: 'All the world are eager to see this Man, who, by his Singularity, has drawn himself into much Trouble; He appears

abroad but seldom, and dresses like an Armenian' (CC XXIX, p.295). In the Preface to the Neuchâtel edition of the Confessions, Jean-Jacques Rousseau recorded his seeming incredulity at the extent of his popularity all over the continent:

Among my contemporaries there are few men whose name is better known in Europe, and whose person is more unknown. My books pervaded the towns, while their author roamed the forests. Everyone read me, everyone criticized me, everyone discussed me, but in my absence. [. . .] Everyone had an image of me, without fearing the original would come to contradict it. There was one Rousseau in society, and another in seclusion, who in no way resembled him (OC I, p.1151).

While exemplifying the typical naïveté of self-proclaimed Jean-Jacques the primitivist, this statement reveals far more about the art of audience manipulation. By 'appearing abroad but seldom', Rousseau rationed his public appearances, creating a stir and tantalizing his audience, disproving the reports of his detractors, but disappearing quickly enough to make only a fleeting impression, which his admirers could then embellish as favourably as Boswell. Either way, Rousseau won: public opinion was engaged through skilful sleight-of-hand.

Accompanying Rousseau across Europe was David Hume who kept an epistolary record for his friends of the methods of publicity employed both by the English press and by Rousseau himself. As Hume wrote to his brother John in March 1766, when Rousseau was on the verge of alienating many of his acquaintances through his inexplicably paranoid behaviour:

Surely Rousseau is one of the most singular of all human Beings [. . .]. He is surely a very fine Genius. & of all the Writers that are or ever were in Europe, he is the man who has acquired the most enthusiastic and most passionate admirers. I have seen many extraordinary Scenes of this Nature (CC XXIX, p.52).

The English press reported the fascination of the French for the 'celebrated Rousseau'

who had 'lodged at the Marchioness de Boufflers, whose gates were, in a Manner. perpetually besieged by Crowds that thronged to see him' (CC XXVIII, p.297). This report appeared both in the St James' Chronicle of 21 January 1766 and the Public Advertiser three days later. Clearly, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was headline news. Hume wrote a first-hand account of the Parisian mania:

It is impossible to express or imagine the Enthusiasm. [. . .] I am persuaded, that were I to open here a Subscription with his Consent, I should receive 50,000 pounds in a fortnight. [. . .] no person so engaged their Attention as Rousseau. Voltaire and every body else, are quite eclipsd by him. I am sensible that my Connexions with him, add to my Importance at present. Even his Maid, La Vasseur, who is very homely and very awkward, is more talkd of than the Princess of Monaco or the Countess of Egmont, on account of her Fidelity and Attachment towards him. His very Dog, who is no better than a Coly, has a Name and Reputation in the World (p.114).

Anything or anyone with any kind of attachment to the beloved star, claims Hume, automatically acquires celebrity by proxy. Rousseau was not simply an adored object, however, but actively promoted himself in public. Hume observed Rousseau's propensity to 'slip out early to take a Walk in the Luxembourg Gardens. The thing was known soon after' (p.114), while Horace Walpole was less subtle in his analysis: 'he was so good as to indulge the curiosity of the multitude, by often walking in the public walks, where the singularity of his dress prevented his escaping their eyes' (CC XXXIII, p.284).

Similarly in evidence in London was what Walpole labelled 'Rousseau's public exhibition of himself' (p.284). Aided by the press, Rousseau was easily recognizable. Not only were his lodgings eagerly tracked down, but the descriptions of the singularity of his person made obscurity somewhat difficult. As the Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser revealed gleefully: 'he is in Buckingham Street, in the Strand [. . .]. When this



gentleman goes abroad, he is generally drest in an Armenian habit, as he thinks it the most convenient and useful clothing' (CC XXIX, p.297). The rapidity and thoroughness of press coverage amazed Rousseau, who could soon be recognized everywhere and by everyone. Although he could never quite believe the desire of his admirers for reproductions of himself in paint, print or marble, Rousseau admitted in the Confessions that 'if this was hollow flattery intended to win me over, it succeeded wholeheartedly. [. . .] It was hard not to be seduced by the[se] ideas' (OC I, p.779). As Hume noted, it was triviality and domestic detail that fascinated the populace, whose heroes only had slightly to alter a routine to elicit an announcement in the papers: 'Every circumstance, the most minute that concerns him is put in the papers. Unfortunately, one day, he lost his dog: this incident was in the papers the next morning. Soon after, I recovered Sultan very surprisingly: this intelligence was communicated to the public immediately as a piece of good news' (CC XXVII, p.309). Even the slightest anecdote concerning the famous Rousseau could topple the most important political news, even, as Hume stated, unbelievably, in the midst of 'the hottest time of our hottest factions, he is not forgot' (p.309).

Despite an intensification of his paranoia about persecution, Rousseau remained in control of his own personal appearances in London, ensuring that a visit to the theatre would be memorable for an audience whom he very easily converted into becoming his own spectators. Admirers crushed into Drury Lane, causing scenes reminiscent of Paris. As the Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser of 25 January 1766 commented: 'The crowd was so great [. . .] that a great number of gentlemen lost their hats and wigs, and ladies their cloaks, bonnets, &c' (CC XXIX, p.297). And yet it was not only the groundlings

who gaped, even the royal family were unable to concentrate for long on the staged production: the Rousseauvian spectacle caused far more commotion. As Hume observed: 'Garrick [. . .], placed him in a Box opposite to the King and Queen. I observed their Majestys to look at him, more than at the Players' (CC XXVIII, p.267). According to Mrs Garrick, Rousseau had to be restrained from 'satisfying the curiosity of the public, by leaning so far out of his box that she had to cling onto his clothes to prevent him from falling into the stalls' (pp.267-68). Tellingly, as with the displaced nobility at Madame de Luxembourg's, Rousseau distracted attention from those made famous through birth and wealth, redirecting the gaze of the besotted spectator towards the man whose celebrity is more his own, a gaze which would remain transfixed, however Jean-Jacques behaved.

#### iv. Confessing

When the Confessions were finally published in Britain and the rest of Europe in 1782 and 1789, revealing the eagerly awaited secrets that had so affected Claude-Joseph Dorat and others in the early 1770s, the reaction was hardly surprising.<sup>12</sup> Even in death Jean-Jacques Rousseau had the ability to appear as a powerfully seductive presence in his writing, circumventing textual distance through his strategic, 'sincere' revelations to an adoring public. Faced with such an intimate portrait of a much loved writer, packed with precise details of medical complaints, sexual misdemeanours, and minor criminal acts, the critical reaction was of bewilderment, confusion, and, perhaps most surprisingly, praise for Jean-Jacques's bewitching frankness. The tone of contemporary reviews

provides an important gauge with which to measure the response of the literary establishment to this new sort of writing from a new sort of hero. While there was shock at the extent of the insight into Rousseau's less pleasant vices, most reviewers seemed swayed primarily by the daring novelty of an enterprise they appeared at a loss to categorize. As the Critical Review of May 1783 put it: 'He recounts his feelings and his arguments, his virtues and his faults from his earliest days, with an unexampled meticulousness. We are interested by his most puerile adventures, and even his faults are almost excused by the frankness of confession'.<sup>13</sup> The European Magazine suggested even more strongly the reasons for its sway in favour of the autobiographical revelations: 'His bewitching eloquence makes one forget, at least overlook, the immorality of many of his actions. [. . .] [S]uch is the eloquence of Rousseau, that we believe few readers, after they have begun to peruse this work, will choose to lay it aside before they come to the conclusion'.<sup>14</sup> The repetition of 'eloquence' throughout this review testifies only too easily to the continuing power of the seductive Rousseauvian phenomenon.

The Monthly Review took a different tone but concluded on a similar note of dazzlement. Confused but intrigued by 'this strange mixture of secret, personal history, with the wild but sometimes ingenious effusions of an over-heated brain', the reviewer seemed eager to exculpate 'poor Rousseau' from involvement, suggesting that 'no honest or humane man would have been sordid and malignant enough to publish them. It was perchance some greedy French bookseller, or some tool of the Parisian philosophers. It looks rather like a publication of the latter, who by ways and means have got hold of the manuscript'.<sup>15</sup> Here, Rousseau is not only absolved of responsibility for the publication of his memoirs, but their appearance is attributed to his enemies, thus confirming



Rousseau's fears about the 'great plot' concocted by those *philosophes* (OC I, p.388) jealous of his fame, and simultaneously undermining any suggestion of Jean-Jacques's 'madness' or 'paranoid delusions'. Either way, in this respect, the figure of Jean-Jacques Rousseau is enhanced rather than diminished by the release of the Confessions. While the reviewer has several problems with overly frank sexual revelations, his primary concern is the minuteness of detail in general, the *longueurs* involved in the presentation of Rousseau's 'whole' life: 'we are often disgusted at that self-importance in this honest man, which makes him think that every little story, that regards himself, or his aunt, or his cousin must be interesting to the public' (p.531). It is noticeable that amongst complaints of Rousseauvian arrogance the reviewer places great stress, here, and in the rest of the review, upon the 'honesty' of Jean-Jacques. Even the *longueurs* themselves, however, contain 'several excellent reflections', due exclusively to the powerfully enticing emotions of the author, whose 'descriptions of [. . .] circumstances renders [them] still more interesting than the circumstances themselves' (p.535). As a consequence, the reviewer places confidence in the reading public 'to judge' the Confessions for itself.<sup>16</sup> In a brief analysis of the Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire, published with the Confessions, the Monthly continues to shirk responsibility for conclusion, suggesting the reader sift through Rousseauvian autobiography for 'the excellent passages' (p.232): 'the best minds will find nourishment for their virtue, piety, and taste, in many passages of these Reveries, which resemble fruit and flowers, scattered here and there through a strange and romantic wilderness' (p.229).

This suggestion that one follow Rousseau on his autobiographical path in quest of honesty and self-enlightenment was certainly taken up by a voracious late eighteenth-

century reading public, ensuring that the 'lower[ing . . .] in the esteem of the Public more than he deserves to be' feared by the Monthly did not come to fruition (p.232). The suggestion of a search for metaphorical 'fruit and flowers' seems to have been taken literally by 'C.L.' a correspondent to the Gentleman's Magazine in 1786, prompting a bizarre debate which ran for over four months. In the September edition of the magazine, 'C.L.' puts forward a request in French which he is sure will prove 'interesting to many of your readers'.<sup>17</sup> Effectively a 'wanted' advertisement, the letter asks for knowledge of the whereabouts of a walnut tree planted by Jean-Jacques himself in the 1720s. Honouring Rousseau, 'friend of liberty, virtue; kindler of the most tender, the most sublime feelings of the soul', 'C.L.' desires to collect nuts from the tree in order to plant himself in English soil and effectively keep Rousseau's celebrated name alive through alternative offshoots of his fertile imagination (p.744). In the November issue of the Gentleman's, 'Entre Nous' responds to 'C.L.' primarily to correct his misuse of French and to suggest that as a pupil of Rousseau, another Emile, 'C.L.' should have been more careful of his grammar and style. 'C.L.' replies forcefully in the December edition with a three page letter, defending his grasp of the French language and reiterating his love for Jean-Jacques, which is over and above that of 'Entre Nous': 'The faint praise - "a writer of some merit" - given to the author of the "Emile" and of the "Social Compact" [sic.], works of such transcendent, of such dissimilar excellence, is a solecism in sentiment far exceeding any of mine in expression' (p.1038). Feeling strongly that 'the eloquent assertor of the primary and equal rights of humanity, should, even in the grave, have a wish tendered to his honour' in a country that appears to celebrate only monarchical suppression, 'C.L.' suggests that the 'offspring' of Rousseau's tree planted in the soil and allowed to diffuse

metaphorically through the minds of the English could only be conducive to the spread of 'political and private happiness'. This bizarre, continuing debate in a popular and widely-distributed journal reveals the extent to which Rousseau remained a topic for discussion, some even feeling the need to protect the reputation of Jean-Jacques, learn from his writings, and scatter his sentiments among an eager British public.

'C.L.' concludes his final letter with a fear that the tree may already have been destroyed, or, perhaps more correctly, redistributed into relics that now seemed to keep alive the legend of Jean-Jacques Rousseau after his death, the 'snuff-boxes and other toys' into which the tree had possibly been 'frittered' (p.1038). The visits to Rousseau described by Boswell and others now became a pilgrimage to his shrine at Ermenonville in the 1780s, pointing to the growth of an industry dealing in objects revered with a startling religiosity by fervent admirers of Jean-Jacques, only too eager effectively to own part of their hero in order to be continually inspired by his genius and, for some, hopefully, to profit from his fame. Trips to Ermenonville were conducted by French and English alike. The aristocracy were particularly numerous at the site of Jean-Jacques' burial, an irony reminiscent of Rousseau's appearances at Drury Lane and his placing at the head of Madame de Luxembourg's table. Ermenonville, owned by Rousseau's final protector, the Marquis de Girardin, was a curious combination of the natural and the literary, offering the traveller an opportunity to admire the scenery while musing upon the maxims, fixed to appropriate trees and caverns, of some of the century's greatest writers, with Rousseau taking the lion's share (see figure 1). Reviewing the anonymous A Tour to Ermenonville the Monthly Review objected to what it perceived as the suspicious didacticism of this enterprise:



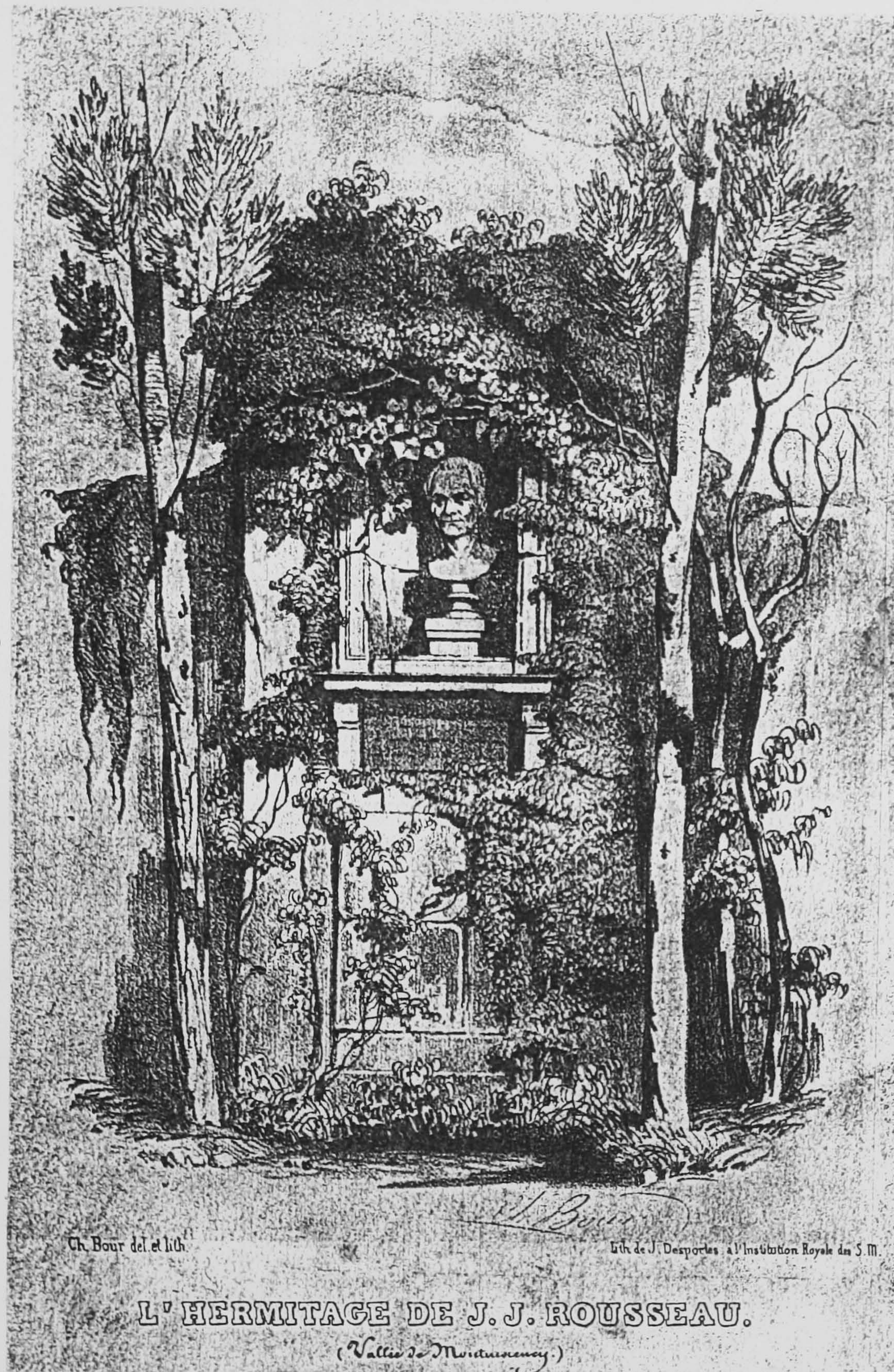


Figure I Charles Bour, L'Hermitage de J.J.Rousseau (1780s)



After paying all due respect to the designer of the garden at Ermenonville, may we not hint at there being something pedantic in thus decorating every corner of a piece of rural scenery with scraps of literature? Any one would smile to see a library crowded with flowers and shrubs, like a greenhouse; why then are we to be interrupted in a garden with other ideas than those which the circumstances of our situation naturally inspire? We enter a library and a garden with different intentions; what, therefore is suitable to the one, is, at best, but officious intrusion in the other, and in both, every one should be left to think for himself: this freedom is enjoyed in the library, where we take down that book only which we want; but here, in the ostentation of moralizing, we are dictated to, and those sentiments which have only pleased another, are forced upon us, perhaps very unseasonably, and with a degree of interruption, which may serve only to produce disgust, or chagrin, where pleasure, or agreeable amusement was intended.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, after a tour of the gardens, following ‘Rousseau’s path’, stopping at ‘Rousseau’s Cabin’ to sit in a chair crafted by the man himself and contemplate the Rousseauvian inscriptions affixed to the doors and walls, it becomes relatively easy to understand the Monthly’s point. The blatant capitalization of Girardin on his most famous resident did not deter the infinite number of Jean-Jacques’ followers who visited the place which even the Monthly recognizes as touched with the religiosity of a shrine: ‘Here, that eccentric genius, Rousseau, expired, and here, his body is entombed, circumstances that will naturally diffuse a sanctity over the varieties of the scenery, and impress every contemplative visitor with reverential awe, untainted with superstition’.<sup>19</sup>

A Tour to Ermenonville itself describes the all-male trip three friends make to visit this ‘hallowed spot’ in order to pay their respects to their idol.<sup>20</sup> Veritable Rousseauvians, the three scorn to visit the ‘monuments to departed royalty’ to be glimpsed along the way at St Denis, aristocrats who, unlike Jean-Jacques, have made no impact upon the hearts and minds of the ordinary people. Despite past monarchical suppression, suggests the author, kings possess only an ‘empire [. . .] circumscribed within the narrow limits of

their own lives', while Jean-Jacques' life and writings usurp external aristocratic ascendancy and penetrate into one's very soul: 'the eloquent apologist of virtue and humanity [. . .] had erected a throne in the hearts of all those who love the one or reverence the other, whose foundations must stand unshaken' (pp.7-8). Exploring Ermenonville, the party happen upon a 'cottage or grot' which once sheltered Jean-Jacques from poor weather and is now represented as the 'shelter and guardian of virtue'. Although an inanimate object, the creators of this shrine to Jean-Jacques suggest that the humble appearance of this ruin belies its importance as a preserver of the illustrious Rousseau and is thus 'entitled to [. . .] respect'. The author does not need such prompting and places himself in the seat where his hero sat and, inspired by his elevated position, 'rested with pleasure on the seat that had once supported him, and felt something like a sentiment of thankfulness to the asylum that had protected him' (pp.36-37).

Encouraged by a corresponding need to protect his hero from tempestuous critical storms the author adds 'Anecdotes (never before published) of that celebrated and singular Man', concerning especially his 'modest and frugal lifestyle' and locals' fondly remembered expressions of his 'sentiments of probity and justice' (p.44; p.50). This chivalrous action was repeated after Rousseau's death across Europe as loyal followers sought to keep alive the Rousseauvian legacy of virtue and veracity. While the apparent discovery of novel anecdotes of the life and death of Rousseau offer the author of A Tour to Ermenonville the opportunity to rewrite the Rousseauvian narrative, it also suggests the author's internalization of the 'one and only' pact of the follower with the famous person. In correcting the critics the author defends not only his hero but bids for the position of most dedicated admirer and Rousseauvian, for 'it is but doing justice to the



cause of virtue, to others and ourselves, to make the world acquainted with such instances of conformity between the writings and the life of great men' (p.62). Learning from the master, the author employs Rousseau's celebrated persona to elevate himself, through self-publicity, to the singular position resulting from discovering the 'never before published'.

The young John Villiers, Earl of Clarendon, published his epistolary account of his quest for intelligence of his idol in 1789 as A Tour through Part of France, Containing a Description of Paris, Cherbourg, and Ermenonville; with a Rhapsody, Composed at the Tomb of Rousseau, a journey driven by 'some principle of veneration and enthusiasm [similar to that which] makes a pious pilgrim take a journey to Jerusalem, or Mecca'.<sup>21</sup> Far from being repelled by or satiated with Rousseauvian autobiography, the Confessions were simply not enough for Villiers, who strives avidly and persistently for more insight into the man himself and, as he hopes, for a corresponding self-illumination: 'Warm, and at the age of three and twenty, I am free to confess myself much under the dominion of my feelings, and empire of my passions. Rousseau had agitated both' (pp.222-23). Rather conveniently Ermenonville seems to be stocked with villagers willing to tell their stories concerning 'Jean-Jacques, as they affectionately called him' (p.264). A cottage once inhabited by Rousseau draws Villiers like a magnet:

I learned many of the particulars of his mode of life, and beheld with a sacred awe, many things that he once used. - Every incident, the most trivial, becomes dignified and interesting, when it relates to such a man; - and circumstances of this kind, such as the apparel he wore, the chair on which he sat, and the bed on which he slept, are particularly attractive, as impressing ideas of personality. I obtained some relics of this great man; and heaving a sigh at the vanity of human life, withdrew from the spot (pp.214-15).

Along with objects touched by the celebrated Rousseau, it seems, could be obtained clichéd Rousseauvian maxims to ruminate upon.

Villiers progresses to another cottage where he meets Antoine Maurice, owner of numerous Rousseauvian relics donated to him by Jean-Jacques' 'widow', Thérèse Levasseur, all of which are labelled with this fact. The old man is a genuine devotee of Rousseau and is instinctively aware of fellow feeling with Villiers, to whom he reveals his greatest treasure: 'a pair of shoes that Rousseau used to wear'. With the shoes, however, come a telling history:

The old man told me, that when the King of Sweden was here, he asked to see them, hearing he had such in his possession. He brought them down in a napkin, and laid them on the table when the King was at dinner. 'Take away the napkin', said the King; 'can't I touch the shoes of Rousseau?'. He eyed them with a look of regard; and, turning to his host, asked him, if those relics didn't give him a great deal of pleasure? The old man trembled, fearing the King would want them; and told him, that they did, more than any thing in life. The King then copied the inscription, and returned them: Many have wished since to purchase them; and the old man has refused five and twenty guineas for them; the Comtesse de Poligny begged some of the hair from them to put in a brilliant ring (pp.266-67).

While this tale highlights clearly the extent of the European craze for relics of the famous, it also points to the sense of self-worth and confidence that the peasant Maurice imbibes from his celebrated possessions, refusing to succumb to the bribes of the wealthy and privileged upper class and asserting his right to ownership. The inscription, aptly on Jean-Jacques's snuffbox, also presented to Maurice, suggests that this sense of a spiritual union with their hero could effect an inner revolution: 'My fingers have touched this box, my heart then quivered, and my spirit became more pure' (p.270). Villiers too suggests he has undergone a life-changing experience at Ermenonville, so much so that leaving feels physically painful: 'With a trembling, an unwilling step I left the village; I longed to

take up my residence there, and to bid adieu to the world. [. . .] Alas! I fear [my feelings] have been too much interested, and that I have prepared myself for many a future pang' (pp.270-71). Yet, in veritable Rousseauvian fashion, Villiers publishes his confessions with a riposte to any possible detractors of his own bid for fame:

the sentiments are such as struck the Author's mind to be natural and just. Should they, in any respect, differ from received opinions, he hopes they will be found to do so justly; not from the love of novelty, or from the caprice of affectation, but from the influence and evidence of truth, and nature. Opinions are not to be the less esteemed and tolerated, that in some measure, aberrate from the common route. There are two grand barriers to our words, our thoughts, our actions; humanity and morals; where those are not encroached upon, all opinion of it is safe, and the publication of it is not to be censured (Preface, vii-viii).

Enthused by Rousseau and his 'honest fame', compelled to publish his account of this inspiration, Villiers feels 'free' to express the 'fullness of his feelings', to reveal to the public his innermost thoughts and desires (p.226; p.222; p.223).

Other British readers of the Confessions employed Rousseauvian revelation for different ends. In the poetry section of the European Magazine for June 1783 is a contribution from 'W.P.' entitled 'Stanzas Addressed to a Lady with Rousseau's Confessions':

O Rousseau! let the spirit of thy page  
Which ev'ry impulse of the heart reveals,  
For me in one momentous course engage,  
And point with truth what pure affection feels.

By thy serene philosophy addrest  
To these cold beings whom no passions move!  
How unavailing to a fever'd breast,  
Which thy Confessions teach to utter – Love.

Wilt thou, fair object, meet a suit so bold,  
With aspect still unchang'd, with temper ev'n:



Remember, dearest, Romish tenets hold,  
That by Confession sinners are forgiv'n.

Thou soul of ev'ry good! with favour hear -  
No other of thy sex can bless my sight:  
Attach'd to thee, their beauties disappear,  
As glow-worms fade in day's superior light.<sup>22</sup>

Addressed initially to Rousseau himself, this poetic submission from an ordinary reader of the European encapsulates the public belief in the efficacy of the new sort of hero, Jean-Jacques himself, to fight their battles and conquer hearts and minds through extraordinarily seductive literature. Unlike the first reviewers of the Confessions, 'W.P.' knows exactly what Rousseauvian autobiography can do for his cause. Trying to embody his idol through an appeal to his lover via the Confessions, the poet looks on expectantly, wooing by proxy. Neither the lady's response to this novel means of allurements nor the final outcome of the 'W.P.'s pleas are recorded. The invocation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau as a benevolent agent in troubled romance suggests the extent to which he had become entrenched in the public imagination as a powerful force for change, his celebrated name known and its signification understood by all. 'Stanzas Addressed to a Lady with Rousseau's Confessions', however, is not simply a ruse to win the affections of a reluctant woman, who may or may not be one of the 'cold beings whom no passions move!'. It is this silent, unresponsive, but all-too present 'Lady' engrossed in Jean-Jacques' memoirs who pervades the poem. Instead of engaging with her desperate suitor, the 'Lady', inspired by Rousseauvian revelation, remains thoughtful and 'with temper ev'n', firmly in control of both text and her response. This very public instance of female pensiveness about engagement with the Confessions suggests that British women were actively pondering what Rousseauvian autobiography could do for them.

Jean-Jacques' model of celebrity, based upon the empathy of a feminized audience, sensitive to his intimate display of subjective experience, offered an appealing form of self-publicity for women readers of the Confessions. The letters of women as diverse as Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and Elizabeth Carter and Elizabeth Montagu reveal a division of opinion about the appeal of Rousseau's writing. Clearly aware of the imminent possibility of the release of some kind of autobiographical memoir Carter expresses concern for the seditious potential contained in the Rousseauvian text as early as 1774. Fearing that a memoir could do 'much more harm than good', Carter discusses the effects of Rousseau's previous productions, but with much less assurance of their literary and moral standing. The word 'dangerous' is used frequently throughout this letter, but the enticing possibilities of this terror reduce the disruptive potential of Rousseau's writings and Carter seems to profit from reading them, even if it is only to increase her own public credit by having it both ways, by reading such fashionable and famous works and then condemning them: 'something great and striking there must always be in Rousseau; but with such a mixture of wrong principles and false reasoning, that renders him the most dangerous writer I ever read'.<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Montagu writes to Carter as soon as she has completed the Confessions to elicit her opinion. Like Carter, although making the occasional tutting noise about 'the strangest book that ever appeared', Montagu offers her friend a rather breathless and excited plot summary, concentrating especially upon the romances of Rousseau's life. Claiming that even a 'pure Virgin' like Carter may read the Confessions 'with less disgust and horror than the Matrons can do', Montagu suggests that the sexual misdemeanours will be perfectly harmless to the young or single woman because they simply will 'not understand' the more explicit scenes and

even if they do, 'they may be safely read'.<sup>24</sup> In a similar fashion, the Duchess of Devonshire writes to her mother exhorting her to read the book, claiming that even a small amount of 'indecenty' must be accepted when revealing a 'private history' to the public. Suggesting that her parent's 'authority' on the book will be the 'best of all', the Duchess promises that if she will not comply with her request, she will 'make' her mother read it.<sup>25</sup>

Both Elizabeth Montagu and the Duchess of Devonshire make half-hearted efforts to justify why they were attracted to such a book in the first place, but their enjoyment of its contents easily overrides any initial scruples. Pleading 'guilty' that she was 'tempted by Laclos' Les Liaisons Dangereuses, published in the same year as the Confessions, because of 'the noise' it was making in the fashionable world, the Duchess goes on to mount a more serious and passionate 'defen[ce]' of her reading of and delight in the Rousseauvian memoir. Over and above any revelation of sexual and personal failings, the Duchess suggests that one should take a great deal more from a work which essentially details the career of a man who achieved literary celebrity through his own means, a book 'in which one may trace the wonderful progress of his great and burning genius' (p.57). Montagu seems to revel in the purchase and devouring of such a controversial narrative: 'had I expected such stuff I shd not have meddled with the book, but as it gives the strangest specimens of the human kind that ever was shewn I am glad I was not prevented reading it' (p.124). She is most excited and openly applauds the revelation of the all-too 'feminine' failings of Jean-Jacques' early life, eagerly turning the tables upon the famous of the male literary establishment by suggesting the universal ability of both sexes to succumb to the seductions of literature when young:



I believe indeed in his early readings romance gave him an affectation of great sentiments. Many a Girl by reading the loves of Mandane for the great Cyrus, or some Princess for Alexander the Great, has been so infected by the passion as to marry a paltry scoundrel, thinking she was acting like the enamoured princess, so our Jean Ja[c]ques fancies he is acting according to the dictates of dramatick magnanimity, while he is telling a paltry lye or committing petty larceny. His imagination is all that is delicate and high about him, and he derives his satisfaction from his sentiments, not from his actions (p.125).

Highlighting the distinction between the ancient hero and the modern, the differences between achieving fame through action and through sentiment, Montagu feminizes the great hero of the late eighteenth century, effectively justifying female romantic 'weakness' by satirizing Rousseau's own capitulation to a life explained through emotion. For Elizabeth Montagu the model of Rousseauvian fame, far from proving unacceptable to women, is only too recognizable and thus can be permissibly employed with the glorious authority of the 'new sort of hero'.

It is thus perhaps surprising that, despite the level of female support in private correspondence, more British women did not rush into print to defend Jean-Jacques Rousseau. While in France the likes of Germaine de Staël and Isabelle de Charrière were publishing heartfelt *éloges* to their hero, British women remained curiously silent on the question of the Confessions.<sup>26</sup> In a review of the translation of M. Guine's Letters on the Character of J.J. Rousseau Mary Wollstonecraft suggests reasons for this lack of direct response. For Wollstonecraft 'a defence of Rousseau appears [. . .] unnecessary – for surely he speaks to the heart, and whoever reading his works can doubt whether he wrote from it – had better take up some other book':

It is impossible to peruse his simple descriptions without loving the man in spite of his weaknesses of character that he himself depicts,

which never appear to have risen from depravity of heart . - and this sympathy should silence cavilers, and lead his defenders to consider whether they can dissipate prejudices over which Rousseau's eloquence had had so little power.<sup>27</sup>

Explicit and slavish engagement with the facts and fictions of the Confessions, Wollstonecraft claims, can lead only to pointless quibbling. In similar fashion to 'W.P.'s silently contemplative lady, Wollstonecraft contends that the ideal reader of Rousseauvian revelation will be one who engages avidly but critically with the text. It is the more general consequences for self-expression arising from the publication of Rousseau's Confessions that should concern the reader: can one improve upon Rousseau's foundations? In a submission to the newly established Monthly Magazine in 1796 Mary Hays offered a similar suggestion about the value of Rousseau's confessional writing for the process of self-examination:

[W]ere every great man to become his own biographer, and to examine, and state impartially, to the best of his recollection, the incidents of his life, the course of his studies, the causes by which he was led into them, the reflections and habits to which they gave birth, the rise, the change, the progress of opinions, with the consequences produced by them on his affections and conduct, great light might be thrown on the most interesting of all studies, that of moral causes and the human mind.<sup>28</sup>

If the famous reveal their secrets and failings, states Hays, society can only reap the benefits of the lessons learnt by those striving for greatness in order to improve upon their mistakes. Accurately gauging the cultural climate, the desire of the public for confessional narrative post-Rousseau, Hays' own thinly-veiled autobiographical novel, the Rousseauvian Memoirs of Emma Courtney (1796), offered as a 'warning rather than an example' of the 'mistakes and weaknesses of our fragile nature', tellingly achieved critical acclaim as an 'uncommon' account of 'a moral problem which is eminently important'.<sup>29</sup>

## v. Rewriting Rousseauvian Fame

Elizabeth Montagu's analysis of Rousseauvian fame and 'W.P.'s anonymous lady reveal how British women actively read and enjoyed Jean-Jacques's writings but with a critical and often a satirical eye. While members of the reading public enthused about and were influenced by Rousseau's mode of self-presentation, women sought to adapt this 'new sort of glory' to their own circumstances. It is this democratic reinterpretation of self-narration that would have thrilled Rousseau and so clearly disturbed Edmund Burke. Despite Burke's influential attitude towards Rousseauvian fame, he could not prevent the enormous public interest in Jean-Jacques and his writings. The fact that Rousseau and his mode of confessional writing had entered the literary and cultural domain as commonplaces rather than shockingly novel occurrences by the first thirty years of the nineteenth century is represented not only by the continuing interest in writing about the self in periodical articles but also in the titles of the fiction on offer at this time. Between 1801 and 1828, there are ten titles prefixed with the word 'Confessions', ranging from a doubly Rousseauvian-sounding translation of Wieland as Confessions in Elysium (1804) to Confessions of a Gamester (1824), an Oxonian (1826), an Old Maid (1827), and an Old Batchelor (1828). There are also nearly forty Memoirs of . . . written between 1782 and 1829, including the Memoirs of an Author (1812) and Memoirs of Myself (1816).<sup>30</sup> The reach of Rousseauvian fame was vast, diffusing outwards to homes and circulating libraries in Britain at an amazing pace, authors employing, reworking, and profiting from Jean-Jacques's brand of celebrated self-revelation.

In 1822, there appeared two very different essays, both concerned with Jean-Jacques



Rousseau and the implications of his method of achieving fame. In February, a review in Blackwood's, ostensibly of a French biography, Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de J.-J. Rousseau, effectively becomes an essay entitled 'On the Genius and Character of Rousseau'. Returning almost immediately to the Confessions the essayist pinpoints Jean-Jacques's singularity as the 'principal source of his fame': 'In contemplating the fortunes and the character of Rousseau, we are <sup>at</sup> one time inclined to think, that if he had possessed common sense, he might have been the greatest man in Europe; and at another, that without his extravagance he would have been nothing. The latter opinion is most likely to be just'.<sup>31</sup> The ease with which one can impersonate the celebrated man is revealed in an anecdote which details how the French actress Sophie Arnaud was forced to substitute a 'tailor of the theatre' for Jean-Jacques when the latter could not join her and her eager company for dinner. Kept silent, he eventually warms to his role and 'out-talked them all, and they separated, each to recount to his friend the wonderful esprit of Jean-Jacques' (150). The suggestion here is not only that an audience can easily be taken in by a reasonable impression of Rousseau, but how simply that same audience can be manipulated into believing whatever 'Rousseau' wants them to believe. The second article, 'On Auto-Biography', in the Edinburgh Magazine of June 1822, also draws attention to the audience, the admirers of the autobiographical revelation. A more positive essay about the pleasures afforded by the 'insatiable appetite of the public for every species of Private Memoirs & Correspondence', 'On Auto-Biography's' author revels in the way confessional literature inspires by 'lay[ing] hold of the imagination'.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the advent of an improved, widely-disseminated print culture and the correspondingly immense popularity of Rousseauvian revelation and its imitators is

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lauded for its levelling tendency, its ability to enlighten and kindle a reading public into learning to express themselves, giving a distinctive voice to 'individual character': 'the facility which printing gives to publications of all sorts, has let in a torrent of Private Memoirs and Letters, which throw a much clearer light on individual character, and an interior of private society, than was ever before enjoyed' (743).

Speaking directly to an eager reader<sup>25</sup> claims the Edinburgh essayist ensures that the famous person 'make[s] the public his confessor' (744). Unlike the Blackwood's reviewer, this journalist believes wholeheartedly in the public's agency, in its awareness of how to perform in the admirer-celebrity pact, its ability to forgive and provide absolution. In opposition to more unenlightened times, the reading public now encourages and corroborates with the publication of 'the structure of private society'. Rousseauvian revelation and its like can have nothing but benefit for British culture, exciting 'such a strong and enlivening interest [and providing] the source of so much valuable instruction with regard to the latent springs of human character' (745). It is in the context of these two differing essays about the effects of the famous author upon his or her public that I want to conclude this investigation into the reach of Rousseauvian fame in Britain. Both texts discussed here have suffered from critical disdain for their tales of self-obsession, their embarrassing outpourings of Rousseauvian excess. Both, however, offer fascinating glimpses into the early nineteenth-century reworking of the frenzy for renown instigated over half a century earlier by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Lady Caroline Lamb's enormous *succès de scandale* Glenarvon (1816), an idealized, fantastic account of the author's brief relationship with the most celebrated man of the day, Lord Byron, is one of the most intriguing satirical investigations of the period into

the creating and sustaining of a famous name and the impact of celebrity culture upon society. '[G]lory and renown drop from the mouth[s]' of just about every character in this work.<sup>33</sup> The heroine Calantha is brought up, in Rousseauvian fashion, to value independence and desire to be 'distinguished and great' (p.29). Married at a young age to Lord Avondale, she soon becomes the toast of society, the 'desire of distinction' propelling her into what she herself acknowledges is a 'gay and brilliant' 'career' devoted to self-promotion (p.43; p.304). Calantha meets and soon falls helplessly in love with the 'wonder of [the] age!', the mysterious, broodingly beautiful Glenarvon, who has '[t]he whole country after him', instigating 'a rage, a fashion [. . .] a frenzy' (p.164; p.111). Glenarvon's celebrity is never presented as an impressive achievement, more an accident of circumstances and favourable facial features. His followers, 'women, children, pigs', are so numerous that '[n]one ever yet resisted [him]' and 'wherever [he] turn[s], new victims fall before [him]' (p.111; p.167; p.174). Most of the novel is set within the political turbulence of Ireland in 1798 where Glenarvon also exerts his power, in a more seriously revolutionary and Rousseauvian fashion, over the rebellious peasants 'who flocked around him, attracted by his eloquence, and easily won by his address' (p.140). Glenarvon proves unreliable and fickle, however, easily rejecting Calantha and the Irish people for the next fashionable woman or cause, his Rousseauvian heroism as shallow as his morals, a fact recognized rapidly by his 'audience': 'the idol they had once adored, they now with a greater show of justice despised' (p.353). A political turncoat, Glenarvon even joins the government forces to quell the rebellion he had earlier espoused so vehemently.

While Lamb casts a satirical eye over a public which can triumph 'at the fall of those



whose talents or situation raise them a little into observation' as swiftly as it can create and support the latest 'glorious creature', she also achieves a far more powerful victory (p.287; p.286). Deserted by Glenarvon, it is his rejected lover Elinor St Clare who leads the rebels into battle, committed to her political principles to the very last. By fictionalizing Byron, Lamb further achieves a double victory. By contrasting Glenarvon's political oscillation with Elinor's devotion to liberty Lamb questions Byron's right to his heroic status and his devotion to Rousseau, the man whom, in the poem which made Byron famous, Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage, he called the 'writer of oracles who set the world in flame'.<sup>34</sup> Analyzing his celebrity, from the powerful position as an intimate and once loyal follower, Lamb turns as easily as her Irish peasants from the mesmerizing but superficial effects of the Byronic persona to direct the spotlight fully upon what Byron so often feared: the stability of his renowned name with his contemporaries. Lamb also capitalizes upon another nightmarish situation that terrified Byron: to be fictionalized, and especially by a female author. To become a 'hero of Madame Scudery or Mrs Clarke' was anathema to Byron, ensuring that Lamb's emotionally and politically fickle, petulant Glenarvon must have been an uneasy portrait to contemplate.<sup>35</sup> From a member of Byron's public, Caroline Lamb catapulted herself, with the publication of Glenarvon, into the role of an equal contender for cultural notoriety.

William Hazlitt's 1823 text Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion tests to the utmost extremes the effect of an artist upon a public in the form of a love affair between H and S. Liber Amoris has created and still causes awkward problems for critics. Even Hazlitt's defenders find difficulty in analysing, or even acknowledging, the ambiguities of this

complex and challenging text. As H himself admits towards the end of Liber Amoris, '[a] more complete experiment on character was never made' (HCW IX, p.160). While others have pointed to the Rousseauvian influence running throughout the text, I want to offer a different angle on the echoes generated by Hazlitt's readings of Jean-Jacques' writings.<sup>36</sup> Hazlitt's suggestion that Liber Amoris was a 'character experiment' needs to be examined more carefully, and in conjunction with his other essays on heroism and, perhaps most fundamentally, in the context of the subtitle to Liber Amoris, the New Pygmalion. For, coincidentally, in the 1770s, it had been Jean-Jacques Rousseau who had revived the Pygmalion legend in European literature.

The link between Rousseau's rewriting of the story of Pygmalion and Hazlitt's updating and reworking of this character fifty years later has never been examined. Rousseau's Pygmalion: Scène Lyrique was staged at the Paris Opéra in 1772,<sup>37</sup> accompanied by Coignet's musical interludes, and was swiftly printed and disseminated across Europe, providing, according to a recent critic, a template for the 'new Pygmalion'.<sup>38</sup> In the Confessions Rousseau also refers to himself as 'another Pygmalion' during the writing and publication of the phenomenally successful Julie; ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse. Creating a 'fair copy' of the novel with which to impress female auditors and deriving immense physical satisfaction from 'using the most beautiful gilt paper, drying the writing with azure and silver powder, [and] stitching [his] notebooks together with slender blue ribbon', Rousseau is thrilled by the possibility of moulding his adoring audience, as Pygmalion shapes his female statue (OC I, p.436). Ironically enough, only one of his listeners reacts as he would wish: 'Without saying anything the daughter sobbed with me from emotion; the mother, who did not understand anything

because she could not find any compliment in it, stayed calm and contented herself in moments of silence by repeatedly saying to me; Sir, that is very fine (p.436). In similar fashion, the Scène Lyrique offers a fascinating glimpse into the response of the female statue who comes to life after a frustrated Pygmalion, fearing a loss of his own genius, appeals to the image he has created as a flawless 'Goddess', with whom he is 'infatuated' (p.5; p.12). Both wanting to possess the statue and be her, Rousseau's Pygmalion agonizes over the dilemmas of artistic creation, the love of a sculptor for his object, both because it is essentially part of himself and so seductively other. Unlike previous interpretations of the legend Rousseau offers not only a 'new Pygmalion', but a unique representation of the female statue, who is very far from a beautiful object.<sup>39</sup> As she awakens, Galathée is immediately imbued with subjectivity. Tellingly, her first and last words in Rousseau's version are simply 'Me!' (p.13; p.14). While Pygmalion responds with an assertion of 'Me', in an attempt to confirm his status as her creator and deny her existence beyond himself, Galathée rejects the materials of her initial composition and thus the authority of her creator: marble is 'no longer me' (p.13). The Scène closes with Pygmalion's subjection and loss of self within his creation: 'It's you . . . it's only you . . . I've given you my whole being . . . I will only live through you' (p.14).

Rousseau's Pygmalion reveals the artist-hero in complete subjection to his female text, or audience, able only to exist through her, unable to mould her reactions at will, and achieving renown by a suppression of self. This complex relationship of an artist to his or her public fascinated William Hazlitt, who was repeatedly concerned in his essays for the periodical press of the 1820s with the status of the hero in contemporary society. In the fantastically titled 'Why the Heroes of Romance are Insipid', first published in The



New Monthly Magazine in November 1827, Hazlitt laments that the feminized hero has become an object simply to be admired in contrast to the 'men of action in the tented field' of past romance (HCW XVII, p.247):

they very wisely say or do little or nothing, rely on their names and the author's good word, look, smile, and are adored; but to all but the heroines of romance and their confidantes, are exceedingly uninteresting and common-place personages, either great coxcombs or wonderfully insipid. [. . .] The discarded or despairing, not the favoured lovers, are unavoidably the most interesting persons in the story (p.246; p.247).

'[T]o be perfectly interesting' to modern readers, suggests Hazlitt, the character of the male hero 'must be drawn as perfectly insipid!' (p.251). Only a figure forming 'any very striking exception to the common rule', who acts and is 'not acted upon' can elicit Hazlitt's approval or interest (p.252). Hazlitt is not advocating a return to characters achieving fame through militaristic means but pleading for the highlighting of the more complex emotions, those unhappy or pensive figures can only 'touch us more nearly' (p.254). Published in the same year as Liber Amoris, Hazlitt's Characteristics: In the Manner of Rochefoucault's Maxims put forward a corresponding idea about contemporary heroism, making reference to the Rousseauvian system of achieving glory. A text usually ignored by Hazlitt scholars, the Characteristics provide an important background to Hazlitt's employment and reworking of the new sort of artist-hero present in Liber Amoris. Offering over four hundred 'thought[s]', nearly all of which are concerned with public self-representation, Hazlitt uses Rousseau to suggest that heroes 'are not known by the loftiness of their carriage; as the greatest braggarts are generally the merest cowards' (HCW IX, p.165; p.168). Placing 'authors' and 'favourite player[s]' indiscriminately among the more usual '[p]ublic characters' of 'warriors, statesmen, &c' presents an image

of a contemporary culture engaged with anyone who offers a form of Rousseauvian fame, regardless of 'birth or fortune' (p.175). The public is fickle and untrustworthy, however; today's star may be tomorrow's unknown, left "'bare to weather'" (p.181). As an extension of Rousseauvian fame, Hazlitt claims that personal property means nothing when compared with the knowledge of self-possession, the awareness that 'being something better than others', asserting one's own self-worth, entitles one to respect and valuation (p.195). Thus, '[t]hose only deserve a monument who do not need one; that is, who have raised themselves a monument in the minds and memories of man' (p.223).

In quest for the new sort of hero, but simultaneously providing an examination of the new difficulties faced by the contemporary idol, Hazlitt created Liber Amoris. The subtitle The New Pygmalion is no coincidence. The artist-hero H, certainly a 'discarded and despairing character', is enticed by the provocative behaviour, promises, and then withdrawal of the affections of his landlady's daughter, S. While it is difficult to ignore the searing pain suffered by the real Hazlitt over the flirtatious games played by the real Sarah Walker, the resulting published text is a slightly different, more ironic affair. H is a new Pygmalion in the same mould as Rousseau's artist. The artist cannot always control his audience, especially the interpretations placed upon events by a female respondent. S is H's audience in Liber Amoris, the object of his affections, but also the subject whom he hopes to seduce, whom he hopes to please in Rousseauvian fashion. To make this clear there is even a section called 'The Confession', where, in an ironic glance at Rousseauvian revelation, S reports upon a previous lover with H as her eager audience. H is so entranced by the abrupt and unexciting romance, that he declares, as a privileged reader of this past text, that its author shall instantly have a place in his heart as 'an angel'



(p.105). The reality of S, her position as the daughter of a lodging-house keeper, is far from angelic. Her willingness to grant varying degrees of sexual favours to male lodgers certainly undermines her heavenly position. The gap between appearance and reality is thus stressed here, revealing H's dual perspective in Liber Amoris. While Hazlitt, like another Pygmalion, wants to 'make a Goddess of her, and build a temple to her', even he is aware of her lack of fit, of how he cannot mould her into his imaginary ideal, unsure 'whether or no she is quite marble' (p.133; p.122). S is a 'Greek statue' but one who is more than possessed of her own subjectivity, able 'to smile, move, and speak' (p.143).

More than a muse to the despairing H, S takes the place of the reading public to whom H hopes to sell his work. The commercial concerns of Liber Amoris highlight the complex divisions in the text between the pain of unrequited love and the need to profit from 'a book of [their] conversations (I mean mine and the statue's) which I call LIBER AMORIS' (p.117). S is someone who must be courted, in the manner of a more difficult, resisting reader, like the woman in 'W.P.'s poem for the European Magazine. H's love letters to S are concerned initially with the amount of work he has completed, his time divided between his status as an author and as an expectant lover. H, it seems, can work both with and without S's presence, despite the claim that he would rather 'have her with [him] to encourage [him] with his sweet smiles': 'half [of the time] was to think of Sarah: and besides, I do not neglect my work either, I assure you. I regularly do ten pages a day, which mounts up to thirty guineas' worth a week (p.112). S's ambiguous responses to H's declarations of love cause him infinite panic. The ground shifts beneath his feet and he is no longer sure of his position: 'no object in nature is substantial, real, but false and hollow, like her faith upon which I built my trust (p.123). The blasting of H's self-

confidence is revealed not only to be personal but professional as S's indifference, her disengagement with the author H, destroys literary 'hopes': 'I had prospects to come, the flattery of something like fame, a pleasure in writing, health even would have come back with her smile - she has blighted all, turned all to poison and childish tears' (p.124). - S's ability to affect H's career is emphasized most poignantly in her return of his own books: his stock of literary fame remaindered by his most important reader.

This enforced separation of reader and writer, however, is not as distinctive as it may at first seem. Although he never succumbs to the servitude of Rousseau's Pygmalion, subjectivity, in the face of such a resisting female reader, seems to cause problems for H. While S 'cut[s] out' her name from the title pages of H's own books when they are returned and effaces herself from collaboration in their composition, the tear in the text will always indicate that they have belonged to someone else, her position as reader and muse remaining an all-too present absence (p.149). S seems to have it both ways here, creating a fissure between herself and H, while still reminding him, perpetually, of their relationship. H's assertion that S has great 'power over [him]' is often contradicted, however, as H himself questions the possibility of entirely losing himself in her (p.128). The most distinctive instance of this retaining of the artistic self in the face of a rebellious creation is present in the very next letter after this declaration of enslavement: 'So that I can but have her with me always, I care for nothing more. I never could tire of her sweetness; I feel that I could grow to her body and soul? My heart, my heart is her's' (p.121). The question mark is not only bizarrely placed to close a statement, but the suggestion of corporeal fusion is destroyed by the claim that she possesses only his 'heart': body and soul retain their independence. The ambiguity of her influence is



certainly left, as the effects of an artist's appeal to an audience ensure paradoxically both subjection and self-assertion: 'She is dead to me; but what she once was to me can never die!' (p.159). As H realizes at the end of Liber Amoris, the courting, the seducing of a female audience and then the continuing manipulation of their reaction is far from straightforward: 'I can scarce make out the contradiction myself. I strive to think she always was what I now know she is; but I have great difficulty in it, and can hardly believe but she still is what she so long seemed' (p.160).

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From the excited reactions of personal meetings to the dissemination, internalization, and redeployment of Rousseauvian fame, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his writings made a huge impact upon British cultural life, revolutionizing the ways in which the fame game could be played in an age of rapidly expanding print culture. With the feminization of fame came a corresponding feminization of audience reaction as well as opportunities for anyone, of any sex or age, to participate in the public representation of oneself. While men responded more slavishly to their idol, British women contemplated but adapted the lessons to be learnt from the Confessions, producing subtle analyses of the frenzy for renown. Far from rejecting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, British men and women sought him out, embracing his doctrines. Persistently, and in spite of detractors like Burke, he remained, for, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, fame became truly democratic.

## Chapter Two

### **Catharine Macaulay: 'triumph[ant], when alive, o'er future fate'<sup>1</sup>**

In her educational treatise Letters on Education (1790) Catharine Macaulay takes issue with the practical efficacy of Rousseauvian fame. While acknowledging the 'enchancing eloquence of the sagacious Rousseau in Émile and other writings, Macaulay laments the chasm between theory and practice, the inability of a famous name to translate adequately into 'a general reformation in the mode of treating infants in France'.<sup>2</sup> By contrast Macaulay aims ambitiously to employ her 'rules of education' to effect change which will be carried subsequently 'into general practice', essentially improving the 'social duties' of women, and making them 'more solid' characters ('Preface', v; p.49; p.50). Creating a written document with such legalistic overtones and prefixed with a name which, according to Mary Wollstonecraft's review was only given increased 'lustre' by this latest production, Macaulay links inextricably her theory and practice.<sup>3</sup>

Associated both with the republican sentiments of her historical writings and involved intimately with the main leaders of the radical Whig movement in the second half of the eighteenth century, Catharine Macaulay's political position was clearly defined for her contemporary audience. Although satirized for her 'masculine' intellectual pursuits Macaulay was taken seriously as a writer and influential figure on the sidelines of the political arena. The 'Celebrated Female Historian', as she became universally known after the publication of her eight-volume History of England, was vividly connected in the public imagination with her friend, campaigner for radical reform John Wilkes, and her brother John Sawbridge, founders of the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of



Rights. In 1800, a City Biography entry on Sawbridge noted Macaulay's substantial contribution to radical Whig ideology: 'if John Wilkes introduced this Gentleman into the practice of politics in the theory he had early made a rapid progress, under the auspices of Mrs Macaulay'.<sup>4</sup> Interest in this female phenomenon, however, was not only confined to the political circles of the metropolis. Macaulay also excited the attention of a British audience fascinated by her History and eager to discover more about the woman behind the work. In an issue of the Town and Country Magazine of 1796, 'P.N.' contributed a 'Letter from a Gentleman in Town to his Friend in the Country, Concerning Celebrated Female Historians', which drew attention to the desire, the wait upon 'the tenter-hooks of impatience', six years after her death, of the country friend's 'mother, aunts, sisters, and the circle of good women who form the assembly in [his] neighbourhood' 'to know what kind of woman [Macaulay] is'.<sup>5</sup> Whether affecting the course of radical politics or stimulating female curiosity in the provinces, Catharine Macaulay's life and writings absorbed public attention.

Yet drawing attention to the 'kind of woman' she was seems to be precisely where the problems begin with recent critical accounts of Catharine Macaulay. To link what is often perceived as the embarrassing public behaviour of Macaulay with her acclaimed, scholarly historical and political writings remains a frustrating inconvenience for eighteenth-century critics. In the only recent analysis of her life and work, Bridget Hill sums up critical unease and confusion with a telling 'Postscript' to a chapter which discusses the excessive adulation received by an all-too compliant Macaulay from 1774-1778, during the time she lived in Bath:

There are times when biographers wish they could ignore part of their subjects' lives. In an attempt to have Catharine Macaulay, her history,

her republicanism, and radicalism taken seriously, why does she have to frustrate her biographer's designs by behaving in such a manner? It would be wrong to give into the temptation of skipping certain episodes of her life. If she is to gain serious study and gain historians' respect she has to be seen as a whole, however embarrassing some parts might be, and made sense of. Yet a nagging doubt lingers that while the private lives of men are rarely allowed to interfere with their public worth, where women are concerned it is different. Today it may be less different than it was in the eighteenth century but the fact is that it is a woman writing history or political polemic is never lost sight of. Consciously or unconsciously it comes between what she writes and the male reader, reviewer, or critic. If being a woman affects the judgment of her work, it is difficult to imagine incidents in her life will be ignored and will not also intrude in any evaluation of her importance and influence.<sup>6</sup>

It is the implications of this almost apologetic afterthought, the irritating historical realities which contribute to Hill's momentary textual aberration that I want to examine in this chapter in order to provide a more balanced analysis of how Catharine Macaulay's public persona and her own developed sense of that publicity fed into her writings and into her notions of civic virtue and the changing conceptions of heroism in the second half of the eighteenth century. Unlike Hill, I do not intend to agonize over the more 'embarrassing' episodes in Macaulay's history, but instead use these issues to investigate how contemporary representations of her highly visible persona contributed to ongoing debates about the value and influence of the famed female writer.

### **i. Public Credit**

The role of the historian in the eighteenth century was necessarily a public one. History was the best-selling and most frequently read and borrowed genres of the period, acceptable reading for both sexes and, of course, a must in the education and

enlightenment of eighteenth-century children. In The Republican Virago, Bridget Hill effectively effaces Macaulay's cultural and political impact as a 'Historian' along with her capability to deal with this highly public role. Similarly Karen O'Brien, in Narratives of Enlightenment, explains the absence of Macaulay from her text by claiming that the male historians she discusses 'adopted an authorial posture of cultural centrality and spokespersonship unavailable to women writers'.<sup>7</sup> Hill further pinpoints Macaulay's inability to cope with her publicity (in both senses of the term) as the cause of her marginalization:

Part of her problem was that of all eighteenth-century women who won fame. They were ill-prepared to cope with it, and the tension between their private and public lives must have imposed intolerable strain on them. The very nature of the apparent acclaim given to women was always ambivalent, the qualified praise barely concealing other far less attractive episodes.<sup>8</sup>

But at a period when women's writing and women writers were increasingly prominent and visible in artistic and literary culture, Macaulay's place in eighteenth-century life needs to be reassessed and centralized. Far from being excluded from public prominence, Macaulay not only took on the hierarchies of establishment, but its varied representations of her reveal a mechanics of fame increasingly being controlled by women.

Macaulay was no timid, delicate, anonymous or pseudonymous lady 'attempting' but inevitably acknowledging her failure to compete with her superiors. Not only did she grapple textually with her male rivals in the field of history, (her favourite target being her great Tory rival David Hume), but employed her own work to puff her claims to greater authority through continual reassertion of her more scholarly methodologies. It is intriguing and profitable to read the progress of her intellectual relationship with Hume



throughout the eight volumes of her rival account of the History of England and then to place it within the context of Macaulay's own writings upon authorship to elicit a different picture of the 'cultural centrality' denied her by recent critics.

The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line was Catharine Macaulay's magnum opus, published over twenty years between 1763 and 1783.<sup>9</sup> David Hume's History of England only slightly overlapped with the publication of Macaulay's first volume, being published between 1754 and 1764, but their enterprises were inevitably to be compared.<sup>10</sup> A direct head-to-head between the two provided the European Magazine in November 1783 with a fascinating and timely article assessing the rhetorical talent of the combative historians. Although Hume had died six years earlier, the magazine retrieved letters between the two on matters of historical fact for an 'Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs Macaulay Graham'. Concluding that it is 'unnecessary to observe, that this celebrated Scotch historian, in the present correspondence, is manifestly inferior to the Lady, at least in argument', the European awards victory to Catharine Macaulay.<sup>11</sup> A 'female historian' was obviously a curious prospect for the gossip-hungry eighteenth-century literary establishment and eager reading public. Macaulay was, of course, instantly aware of her novelty status, and far from shying away from her oddness, she fully exploited her position, while still ensuring she remained a serious contender for historical laurels. Despite slight allusions to her gender in the 'Introduction' to the first volume of the History in 1763, the overall tone of the authorial comment is profoundly self-assured. Even the inevitably clichéd references to the 'defects of a female historian' serve to expose rather than disguise the ambition of the author. It is as the figure of a genderless 'historian', however, that Macaulay is most

eager to display herself: 'Labour, to attain truth, integrity to set it in its full light, are indispensable duties in an historian. I can affirm that I am not wanting in these duties' (History, I, x). Macaulay assures the reader that, if anything, she is overqualified for the task. Her spur to write so far overrides the considerations of her sex that they pale into insignificance when placed against the desire to re-educate the public, to act as its leader.<sup>5</sup>

The invidious censures which may ensue from striking into a path of literature rarely trodden by my sex, will not prevent a selfish consideration to keep me mute in the cause of liberty and virtue, while the doctrine of slavery finds so many interested writers to defend it by fraud and sophistry, in opposition to the common reason of mankind and the experience of every age (History, I, x).

Macaulay's opening declarations not only support the worthy causes of 'liberty and virtue', but the equally worthy cause of the public promotion of Catharine Macaulay.

While Hume remains quite literally a marginal presence within the earlier volumes as Macaulay cites his work occasionally and uncritically, from Volume VI onwards, when party politics become more explicit in the discussion of the Civil War and its aftermath, he becomes an antagonist whose findings are exposed against historical evidence. Hume died in 1776, and Macaulay's final volumes were published between 1781 and 1783, but were probably researched and even composed during Hume's final years. Macaulay mocks his arrogant assumption of the laurels of history in the Preface of Volume VI. Although Hume has been dead for five years, Macaulay seeks to surpass his achievements, emphasizing the importance of contemporary celebrity for those active in literary and historical circles in the eighteenth century. Deeply critical of Hume's inventive, almost fictionalizing methods, Macaulay draws attention to the feminizing narrative effects of his History. Comparing his volumes to trash more usually obtainable from the house of formulaic fiction, the Minerva Press, she suggests that his writing

merely 'serves as an elegant past time for the hours of leisure and idleness' and 'leaves the reader perfectly ignorant as to characters, motives, and often facts'. Perfect for an afternoon lounging on a sofa, but insufficiently rigorous or intellectually engaging. Although not entirely disparaging her rival, 'blessed' as he was 'with that genius and profound sagacity necessary to form a complete historian', Macaulay suggests that his talents were misused, allowing a gap in his historical 'wholeness', which has been amply exploited by his female competitor: '[Hume] had reason to flatter himself with the prospect of enjoying, without a rival, all that extensive fame and popularity which is justly due to the instructors of mankind' ('Preface', History, VI, vi). Despite presenting the reader with a more uncomfortable, more radical and republican version of events and thus selling fewer copies than her rival, Macaulay seems to suggest that while Hume's narrative is popular and 'a good read', her own offers far more. As Hume himself discovered on a visit to Bath in the 1760s, the missing parts of his historical corpus could be only too literally embodied. Whereas Macaulay received 'extraordinary ovations from enthusiastic admirers' and portraits of her were 'on every printseller's counter', Hume remained unnoticed and invisible.<sup>12</sup>

It was not only prefatory matter which engaged in processes of public one-upmanship. Even the seventeenth-century historical events detailed from Volume VI of the History to the very final page of Volume VIII became imbued with the presence of David Hume and his misdiagnoses. The 'Advertisement' to Volume VI itself marks a departure for Macaulay in awareness of the needs of her public. Acutely tuned to critical comments, she makes concessions in the composition of the volume, to her own detriment:



The author, having heard that long notes were tedious and disagreeable to the reader has altered the method which she pursued in the first five volumes of this history, and at a much longer expense of labour has woven into the text every part of the composition which could be done without breaking into the thread of the history (History, VI, ).

Not only will the reader have a sense of the author catering to their every whim, but the even more profound realization of the living presence behind the composition of historical writing. Hardly seeking to hide her creativity or public persona, Macaulay places herself firmly within the lines of historical discourse. Once a visible textual presence, she can, of course, do battle with Hume while simultaneously discussing the events of the later seventeenth century. Released in 1781, the same year as Volume VI, Volume VII, which points out the follies and frivolities of the court and government of Charles II, contains numerous attacks on what Macaulay perceives as Hume's deliberately impartial blindness to the negative aspects of monarchical government: 'Mr Hume, whose partiality on the side of the court in this part of his history, is a greater disgrace to his admirable genius and profound sagacity than any page of his historical writings' (History, VII, p.499). Despite her own claims to impartiality, Macaulay had been critically accused from the outset of partisan republican sentiments, or an 'exuberance of zeal' as the Monthly Review put it.<sup>13</sup> In Volume VII Macaulay reiterates concern about her greatest rival's own zealous politics. Cleverly, however, she also inverts the criticism aimed at herself and allows it to redouble back ironically at Hume:

Mr Hume asserts, that, contrary to the harsh and malignant drawing of Bishop Burnet, there is a full contrast and opposition between the characters of the emperor Tiberius and Charles the Second [. . .]: but here we observe, that Mr Hume, laying aside his usual partiality for princes, does not, in the respect of capacity, do the English monarch justice; Charles extricated himself from difficulties into which his ill conduct and treachery had involved him, with an address that united the approbation of a Machiavel; and neither Tiberius nor

Sejanus could have conducted in the clue of dark and standard policy with more skill and insight than as manifest in the conduct of this prince in the whole of his contest with the exclusionists! (History, VII, p.332).

Deftly attacking Hume and promoting her own politics by extending his own argument and developing his inconsistencies, Macaulay seeks to establish her reputation as the writer more deserving of historical laurels.

Catharine Macaulay did not only engage with the question of authorship obliquely, however. In 1774, she produced a pamphlet which directly analyzed the legal questions surrounding authorship which had enflamed the country.<sup>14</sup> A Modest Plea for the Property of Copy Right enters the debate on the side of the booksellers, suggesting that it is in the authorial interest to interact with the professionals to promote one's writings rather than allow the public to reap the rewards of literary labours. A defence of the bookselling profession, claims Macaulay, is simultaneously a protection of authorial rights. Although authors do not seem to be always flatteringly represented in this pamphlet, Macaulay is concerned with dishonest, aristocratic writers, who exploit the bookseller financially, which in turn not only affects the business but the bookseller's other more deserving clients. The analogy employed to attack the economic power in the literary marketplace of the likes of 'the Bishops of GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL, and Lord Lyttelton' ensures the link with political exploitation is impossible to miss:

There are some low-minded geniusses [sic.], who will be apt to think they may, with as little degradation to character, traffic with a bookseller for the purchase of their mental harvest, as opulent landholders may traffic with monopolizers in grain and cattle for the sale of the more substantial product of their lands'.<sup>15</sup>

Grimly humorous, Macaulay details the fate of the impoverished author, condemned to suffer from all angles, forever at the mercy of the unjust social hierarchy:



literary merit will not purchase a shoulder of mutton, or prevail with sordid butchers and bakers to abate one farthing in the pound of the exorbitant price which meat and bread at this time bear; the brewer, the linen-draper, the hosier, &c. &c. will all think their ignorance in letters an excuse for extorting, for the mere necessities of life, sums which the wretched author has not the wherewithal to pay; and it is to be doubted, if a sheriff's officer, when a cast of his office is necessary to conduct the self-denying philosopher to the last scene of his glory, it is to be doubted, I say, whether he will abate one tittle of his accustomed extortions (p.15).

The 'public' for Macaulay becomes oppressive and oppressing, directed and controlled as it is from above.

Instead the Modest Plea focuses attention on the increasing professionalization of literature in the eighteenth century and its benefits to authors. Not only are books 'the cheapest articles sold' (p.31) and thus easily consumable by all, but with technological improvements and the marketing efforts of the bookselling fraternity, they are infinitely desirable as material goods: 'Booksellers also, in these times, understand their interest better than to give very bad editions of authors. We have in general better paper, better print, and more elegant editions of English authors than I believe were ever known' (pp.30-31). With the system of patronage contributing to social inequality and dishonest, sycophantic literary productions, Macaulay illustrates how removing copyright from the hands of the booksellers and placing it firmly within the grasp of the 'public' can only lead to a 'ruinous' (p.37) state of literature and a general cultural climate of 'Gothic barbarity and ignorance' (p.43). What is lost when one is compelled to write for an oppressive patron is authorial originality and independence, the presence of one's own opinions within the text, opinions which can become 'miserably mangled' when intermingled with the need to impress a superior (p.43):



I am afraid, it is from dependent writers alone that we must expect all our future instruction. - but can that instruction be edifying which falls from a venal pen, exerted merely to earn the favour of a patron, by making that which is worse appear the better reason, and by setting forth, in false colours, all the prejudices and corrupt views of the men from whose hard-earned bounty the author expects bread? (p.42)

Thus '[i]f literary property becomes common, we can have but two kinds of authors, men in opulence, and men in dependence' (p.37).

In similar fashion to the attitude expressed towards Hume in the History of England, Macaulay takes a swipe at another male bastion of the literary establishment, Samuel Johnson, in the Modest Plea. Although not expressing his opinions in print about Macaulay, Johnson was one of her most vehement detractors.<sup>16</sup> Exacting revenge upon his comments about her, Macaulay goes one step further and not only attacks Johnson in print, but points directly and sarcastically to his inconsistencies and pretences to royal favour: 'according to common report, that mighty Colossus of literature, the great DR JOHNSON, before he happily experienced the munificence of a royal patron used to acknowledge, that in this country booksellers were the best patrons to authors' (p.35). Effectively belittling Johnson through the triple ironic references to vast size, this passage not only hints at Johnson's selling-out to and 'feminine' dependence upon royalty, but his consequent loss of originality and thus genuine entitlement to the appellation of author. For, in capitulating to the aristocracy, accepting a royal pension and thus effectively writing for a patron, suggests Macaulay, Johnson neither deserves his famous status nor his reputation as an independent writer who had always asserted himself to be vehemently anti-patronage. By appending his name to a text Johnson loses any control over not only his words but any cultural significance the name, which is no longer his own, might suggest to the fickle reading public. If 'Fame is all that authors ask below'

(p.14), Johnson, according to Macaulay, has effectively lost the right to 'the approbation of the public [. . .] during his life-time' (p.16) by prostituting his talent to the ruling classes.

Macaulay, however, is only too aware, that with such criteria, she actively deserves her celebrated status. In Letters on Education. With Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects published at the end of Macaulay's life in 1790, she addressed her audience in the 'Preface' to the text. Given Macaulay's penchant for research, it is obvious that she considered her own career worthy of recording for her readers. It is her importance, her cultural and historical authority that she draws the reader's attention to in this late text. Citing an originally private letter that subsequently appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1789 after the author's death, which refers to what she labels her 'immutability', Macaulay creates a puff by proxy, while simultaneously addressing the profundity of her writing:

Her work is really wonderful considering her sex [. . .] On a second perusal of Mrs Macaulay Graham's book, I saw more, much more, in it, than I did at the first hasty glance I took at it. I have read it through with attention, and was well repaid by the entertainment and satisfaction it afforded me. She is not only a bold and fervid writer, but a shrewd and acute reasoner (Education, viii).

The writer of the appraisal of Macaulay's talents, 'Mr Badcock', is considered a 'gentleman of uncommon celebrity in the literary world' and 'a sufficient authority' to employ for a character reference. A private comment, which was eventually published in an immensely popular journal and then taken up by Macaulay can only increase the number of readers with access to favourable impressions of the author of Letters on Education. Such an unmediated account also adds to Macaulay's credit. Yet a closer examination of the actual content of the quoted portion of the letter reveals another level

of praise for the female historian to the detriment of the 'uncommon celebrity' Mr Badcock. It seems that Badcock was forced to reread Macaulay's writing, the implication here being that her arguments were too scholarly and complex to fathom at a first reading. His awkward assertion of her female status tries to deflect attention away from his own lack of understanding. If she really did possess what Badcock considers the general female inability to 'adapt' their 'talents' 'to abstract speculations' (vii), he would have not even contemplated rereading her writing. Aware of her intellectual superiority over a male pillar of the literary establishment, Macaulay not only refers to her own famous name, but in doing so, effectively destroys another.

**ii. The Democratization of Fame: 'Fame is the only reward which, in the present times, true virtue hath to hope'<sup>17</sup>**

If Catharine Macaulay asserted her equality in the republic of literary fame, how did she treat the concept in her writing? Macaulay not only considers how heroes are created and maintained but offers a levelling of the hierarchies of celebrity, democratizing, but also re-gendering the discourses of fame. By discrediting male military heroes of the past and reexamining the nature of a 'heroic deed', she points to a theory of civic virtue, attainable by both sexes, as the true heroism. Contemporary fame is all: one must earn the approbation of one's society during a lifetime and the effects must be seen instantly. The most recent essay on Macaulay, by Susan Wiseman touches upon but ultimately evades this issue. Discussing the differences between the History of England and the Letters On



Education, Wiseman perceives a deliberate split between texts. 'Political history, for Macaulay or for those she wrote about', she concludes, 'began with the relationship between event and virtue, usually masculine virtue. Letters on Education, a text which takes up questions of civic virtue by concentrating on the shape of the individual, whilst the History analyses the shaping of a state'.<sup>18</sup> Wiseman thus creates a false distinction in the Macaulay oeuvre. Not only can the individual not be separated from the state for Catharine Macaulay, but it is the state that actively shapes the individual and moulds a politicized citizen. As Macaulay illustrates in the 'Introduction' to the Volume I of the History of England, it is the 'genuine notions of virtue and public utility, on which the fame of great men is built' (I, xii). A hint in the Letters on Education further points to the use of the male gender simply as shorthand to discuss an individual of either gender: 'though I have been obliged (in order to avoid confusion) to speak commonly in the masculine character, that the same rules of education in all respects are to be observed in the female as well as to the male children' (Education, p.142). Far from wilfully excluding 'the shaping of the female citizen'<sup>19</sup> Macaulay puts forward a theory and practice of fame that is obtainable by all adhering to the prerequisites of 'virtue and public utility'.

Wiseman's claim that the History of England is best characterized by the relationship between event and virtue, usually 'masculine virtue' is perhaps an ideal statement to examine more closely. While Wiseman gives little indication of what she means by male virtue, I assume that she refers to the self-sacrificing attributes of a hero, his warlike exploits for the greater good of the state. This, however, was becoming an anachronistic historical model in the mid-eighteenth century, when the composition of history followed

public taste, which in turn voiced its desires for an alternative kind of hero. Battles and martyrdom were becoming causes for ennui: the quotidian was all. As Hugh Blair signals in his Letters on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1784):

It is now understood to be the business of an able Historian to exhibit manners as well as facts and events; and assuredly, whatever displays the state and life of mankind, in different periods, and illustrates the progress of the human mind, is more useful and interesting than the detail of sieges and battles.<sup>20</sup>

Or as Macaulay herself acknowledges in a digression to her unfinished History of England, from the Revolution to the Present Time. In a Series of Letters (1778):

I have not teased you with perplexed and confused descriptions of battles, seldom understood by the writer, and never by the reader [. . .]. [I]s it not a contemptible vanity in historians to waste their time, and, what is yet worse, the patience of their readers, in long and minute relations of military actions [. . .]? [D]escriptions of battles are in general the dullest and least interesting part of an historical narrative. [. . .] [S]ince military science has become more generally diffused, the brilliancy of military action has been in common to more or less civilized societies.<sup>21</sup>

'Brilliancy' can no longer be measured on the battlefield: military prowess is only too easily attainable, even 'common'. To engage the public imagination, the historian must provide other examples more palatable to the vast eighteenth-century audience greedy for more diverse and exciting heroes or villains to emulate or disdain. 'Heroism' becomes increasingly a concept open to all.

The History of England provides numerous heroic displacements and replacements, as old notions of 'masculine virtue' are knocked squarely off their seemingly inaccessible pedestals. Macaulay's lack of veneration towards the great did receive some criticism and she addresses the reviewers in the 'Preface' to Volume VI (1781): 'If I have been severe on misguided princes, and bad ministers, it is with a view only to the interests of the

people'. Rather than 'varnishing with false colours, the vices of the powerful', Macaulay suggests she has stripped away glittering robes to expose the corruption beneath, yet again, for the enlightenment of her reading public. But Macaulay is only too eager to reveal the imperfections in the character of all men glorified for so-called heroic deeds and alleged 'virtue'. In Volume I, famed explorer Sir Walter Raleigh receives a very brief panegyric followed by a more lengthy character assassination. While he is 'admired' and has an acknowledged 'universal genius', Macaulay deems his attempts at historical writing lacking in proficiency and expertise: 'great as were his abilities, great as were their improvements, he had not yet attained to that exquisite judgment which distinguishes what is truly desirable from what is vulgarly esteemed so' (pp.117-18). Instead of capitalizing upon his celebrated status, Macaulay roundly condemns Raleigh for being eternally 'unsatisfied with fame' and bypassing the independence this position automatically confers to revel with 'courts and their disgraceful dependencies': 'Though used with a barbarous indignity by his sovereign, he seized on every opportunity to offer his services' (p.118). As unexpectedly sycophantic as Samuel Johnson, whom Macaulay had criticized for a similar desertion of originality and authority in A Modest Plea, Raleigh loses his heroic status for dereliction of duty.

It is this misuse of ambition and corruption of one's celebrated position that most angers Macaulay in the History of England and its unfinished epistolary sequel (1778), intended to discuss events up to the present day, but which eventually only covered the period 1689 to 1742. Abuse of 'Power' remains an intensely troubling problematic in the latter text. Macaulay comments not only on seventeenth-century instances of political and cultural oppression, but laments the increase of self-importance without virtue in her



own century. Ambition and action are acceptable unless coupled with selfish motives which harm the public's liberty. The questions Macaulay poses to her 'heroes' are succinctly encapsulated in The History of England, from the Revolution to the Present Time where she enquires of William III: 'we will [. . .] compare his opportunities, with the use he made of them; and we shall in some measure be enabled to judge, whether public good or private interest, virtue and ambition, had the strongest influence over his mind' (ii, p.75). Concluding that William 'ruined the finances of England, by engaging her in two long and expensive wars', Macaulay assures the reader that they 'will not find it a difficult matter to determine the questions' (ii, p.77). Far from advancing his popularity, William's selfish behaviour does nothing but harm: 'SUCCESS, which ever enlarges the noble mind, shrunk William's to all the littleness of a vulgar character' (ii, p.76). But, as Macaulay realizes in the History of England, 'SUCCESS' has become all too easily attainable in the eighteenth century - and for very little reason. Astutely recognizing the mechanics of contemporary fame, Volume VII comments on 'the opportunity of puffing in the public newspapers'. Now, with such publicity, 'a feather well adjusted, a title, a ribbon, unexpected riches acquired in the East, or a successful monopoly, every individual becomes of consequence' (p.493).

While one may suppose that this would please the republican sentiments of Catharine Macaulay, she, in fact, has some problems with 'this general spirit of levelling' (p.493). For, rather than socially and culturally beneficial, dishonest forms of puffing can be as harmful as the blinkers placed on the populace by corrupt courts. Everyone now has the opportunity to become famous: 'As in these days the court enjoyed an exclusive right in that species of deception on the public, called puffing; a deception which, in modern

times, is the general practice of men of all ranks, from the shoe-black to the sovereign' (History, VI, p.237). Macaulay's attitude here seems curious. Surely a democratization of celebrity is exactly what she has been suggesting all along in her writings? Yet if we examine this statement more closely, it is the practice of undeserved puffing that angers Macaulay. The wrong sort of people, she suggests, are creating an image of England that ignores those who truly deserve the accolades. English behaviour shocks and annoys Macaulay, who claims that a warped image is being projected to the rest of the world. Far from appearing the 'respect[ed]' 'mother of heroes, legislators, patriots, and martyrs, her own sons take a satisfaction in convincing the admiring world, that they were under a gross mistake, and that England never produced any character considerably above the stamp of vulgar life' (History, VI, pp.493-94). Grimly ironic, Macaulay suggests that the mechanics of puffing have their own oppressive hierarchy:

Let the man who fattens on the spoils of corruption, who wantons in the parade of ill-gotten riches, who feasts on the bread of the deluded, let him suffer the honest man to reap the meagre harvest which he disdains; let him be suffered to enjoy his poverty and his honest fame; [. . .] lest by persuading all mankind that virtue is a non-entity, the market should be over-stocked with villains; that the price of this commodity should be lowered; and that abler politicians should attain the object of his desires, for this he may be assured, that all these eminent talents which are necessary to constitute a truly great man, could never fail of meeting with an unlimited success in the ways of a corrupt advancement (p.494).

A 'truly great man', it seems, can buy his virtuous reputation at a competitive price, out of reach of those who have genuinely earned the appellation.

A rather bleak picture begins to emerge from the History about the prostituted figure of Fame. But this is only one side of the story. Macaulay does manage to wrest control of the narrative from the hands of the corrupt. So, who are the citizens who, under

Macaulay's strict criteria, deserve accolades for their contribution to their country's history? The answer may be a surprising one for critics of eighteenth-century women's writing, who have long held Macaulay as a woman who tried to ignore her own sex, both in life and writings. For, in the History of England, it is women who exhibit the qualities needed for heroic status, the attributes demanded by Macaulay and her contemporary eighteenth-century audience. Scornful of those who are idolized for doing little, such as the imaginary Prince in Letters on Education, a 'being, set up as a pageant for the idolatry of the public' (p.224), Macaulay praises anyone whose actions benefit the state, or who genuinely toil to earn their deserved celebrity status. Far from being excluded from Macaulay's narration, women form a prominent part of the History of England, not only in their domestic roles as wives and mothers, as many critics have assumed, but as influential citizens whose actions effect political change and make history.

From the very early volumes of the History, women appear as actors in the political arena. Macaulay does not erase or ignore female contributions, but is only too eager to promote any 'anecdote which does honour to the female sex' (History, II, p.217). Any example of woman's participation gives Macaulay 'infinite pleasure', and she laments that 'there are few' and feels this absence with 'a sensible regret'. But by offering and promoting these historical examples of female fame, Macaulay intends to project a theory of celebrity into the present day to influence the readers of her writings and to encourage them to seek fame in practice. Whereas 'masculine virtue' has proved itself only too corruptible, Macaulay's recommendations suggest that women's political influence can have only a 'very happy effect on the conduct of society' (p.218). Historical examples of male heroism offer 'so many melancholy instances of human weakness', that a much



needed injection of feminine virtues into a tired model will cause a revolution in cultural and social improvement. From far too many famous men 'falling from the highest pinnacle of reputation into the pit of shame and infamy', 'the essential superiorities of virtue and honour' represented by women in the History of England and necessities for glorification of individual and state, will arise a disdain for 'the fancied distinctions of a peerage and a ribbon' (p.218). True fame cannot be represented by trifling titles. True fame can only write itself into contemporary history through self-exertion and pride in one's benevolent actions and deeds. Essentially centred in the individual of either gender, the genuine citizen has the ability to effect change through active intervention in the issues of the day. Advocating the protection of the individual citizen from the necessity of self-sacrifice, Macaulay's notions differ from historical examples of martyrdom or military heroism.

By contrast, the ability to benefit from one's virtuous actions, to enjoy one's fame, is continually advocated in the History of England. Raleigh is censured for his incapacity to deal with his fame, while the likes of Lady Russell in Volume VI are lauded for actively living on to enjoy a reputation, even in the harshest circumstances. While her executed husband is dealt with briefly and extolled quickly for his patriotism, Lady Russell receives more lengthy praise for her 'heroic exertions' (p.446). Throughout the History, the 'hero' epithet is employed sparsely, but is here lavished upon the 'magnanim[ous]' conduct of Lady Russell (p.445). Despite all the odds, Lady Russell refuses an easy way out, fights against 'the example of the Roman Arria, in that act of conjugal heroism for which the illustrious woman is so justly celebrated', declines, unlike Arria, to die selflessly when her husband's reputation is tainted with accusations of

political conspiracy (p.446). Suicide is not an option here and it is one that Macaulay actually glorifies. The comparisons made to the suicidal Arria not only elevate Lady Russell above her Roman likeness, but her endurance points to Macaulay's reworking of the tropes of ancient fame for a modern day audience:

the following circumstance in lady Russell's conduct, proves, that she was not in any degree inferior in that presence of mind and constancy of temper which so highly distinguished the wife of Petus. Lady Russell's only son, Wriothesly, duke of Bedford, died of the small pox in May 1711; to this affliction succeeded, in November 1711, the loss of her daughter, the dutchess of Rutland, who died in child-bed. Lady Russell, after seeing her in her coffin, paid a visit to her other daughter, who was married to the duke of Devonshire: as it was necessary to conceal her grief from the dutchess of Devonshire, who was also at this time in child-bed, she assumed a cheerful air, and answered her anxious daughter's enquiries with the words, 'I have seen your sister out of bed to-day' (p.446).

Stoic, but with a modern twist, Lady Russell not only performs her duties to family and state with superlative heroism, but lives to feel pride at her own actions, see her reputation expand and her name celebrated by her contemporaries.

Even when women intervene in politics by proxy, it is they who are given the credit by Macaulay. Under the oppressive rule of Charles I, detailed over Volumes I to V, the most conspicuous and politically efficacious female is the wife of Judge Crook during the 'important trial and judgment in the case of ship-money' (*History*, II, p.217). Crook too 'fearful of exposing himself to the resentment of a wicked and powerful ministry, had determined to give judgment for the king'. Forced into an impossible situation Crook is more than ready to capitulate to threats, unable to exert his legal power. The heroic actions of his wife, 'a woman of true virtue', ensure, however, that the outcome is quite different. Claiming with 'exalted sentiments' that she would rather suffer a life of 'want or any misery, rather than be the occasion of his acting against his judgment and his

conscience', she 'strengthen[s]' the Judge's resolve and he capitulates to her better judgment, 'altered his purpose, and not only gave his opinion against the king, but argued with a noble boldness and firmness on the side of Law and Liberty' (p.217). Not only does Crook's wife prove a strengthening force, she is effectively and actively portrayed as embodying the virtues of 'Law and Liberty', ensuring the victory, for Macaulay, belongs to her rather than to her husband. Judge Crook, who should have been the supporter of these natural rights, is characterized as representing one of 'many melancholy instances of human weakness' (p.218), unable to bear the weight of the virtues necessary for genuinely deserved renown. The 'just' and 'well-founded' principles of his wife, however, crown her in Macaulay's eyes with the laurels and position at 'the highest pinnacle of reputation' (p.218).

Numerous other unnamed women fill the pages of the History of England with their heroic actions. In Volume III, at the height of agitation against Charles I, women are involved with the political action at every step of the way. From the machinations of the Queen, who is continually 'transported with passion at the want of resolution' of the king, her 'obed[ient]' 'submissive husband' (p.142) to the 'female petitioners' who protest that they are 'sharers in the common calamities which oppression produced' (p.186), Macaulay analyses female participation in the state at every level of society. Desire for political reform moves every individual in a state regardless of age, occupation, status, or gender:

Every thing which could excite passion, and fix attention, actually subsisted at this critical juncture. The fears of men were alarmed, their expectations raised, and the pulse of the public beat high for a full enjoyment of Liberty: the mechanic neglected his art, the apprentice his employment; the shops were left empty; and even the women, laying aside their domestic cares, engaged with the men in



political intrigues: a rage for reformation seized the whole community (History, II, p.117).

Perhaps one of the most intriguing representations of a politicized female, however, comes at the very end of the final volume of the History of England. Queen Mary receives an extremely contradictory character analysis, depending upon her sense of independence. Macaulay is at first deeply complimentary, considering her abhorrence of the monarchical institution, to Mary's advanced abilities to rule:

in the exercise of office of regent, she displayed a fortitude of mind, a strength of judgment, an attention in the management of public affairs, an acuteness of sagacity of parts, which manifested that she would have filled the throne with an equal degree of dignity, and with as great an advantage to the people as nay one of the most boasted successors to the Norman Conqueror (History, VIII, p.318).

High praise indeed from such a fervent republican. Yet only a page later, Macaulay has changed her mind about Mary's influence, reasserting her anti-Tory political opinions: 'she cannot be classed among the illustrious characters which have done the highest honour to the human race, except by those who imagine that passive obedience to husbands stands the foremost in the list of female duties, and is the highest virtue to which any woman can aspire' (p.319). Abdicating her powerful political status and cultural importance for submergence in domestic concerns, and thus wasting the opportunities afforded her by the political situation earns Mary nothing but scorn from Macaulay, the vehement Whig supporter of the reforming aims of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Far from ignoring the situation of the female citizen, Macaulay suggests that woman is not only capable of aspiring to 'higher virtues' than domesticity, but that she has actually proved that she is more than able to achieve the 'highest honour to the human race', and to pursue and actively complete 'honourable' actions with

considerable and celebrated success.

### iii. A Living Monument

Catharine Macaulay allows the women in her writing a cultural centrality, but did her own culture treat her in similar fashion? Was Macaulay as crippled by her public image as Bridget Hill in The Republican Virago suggests so vehemently? In her Female Biography; or, Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women, of all Ages and Countries of 1803, Mary Hays examines the life and reputation of Catharine Macaulay, introduced as a 'lady, who, by her writings, and the powers of her mind, has reflected so much credit on her sex and country' (V, p.287). Not only figured as a female hero, but a valuable asset to England, Hays goes on to analyze Macaulay's contemporary reception:

A female historian, by its singularity, could not fail to excite attention: she seemed to have stepped out of the province of her sex, curiosity was sharpened, and malevolence was provoked. The author was attacked by petty and personal scurrilities, to which it was believed her sex would render her vulnerable. Her talents and powers could not be denied; her beauty was therefore called into question, as if it was at all concerned with the subject; or that, to instruct our understandings, it was necessary at the time to charm our senses.<sup>22</sup>

What is so intriguing about Hays's statement is not the inevitable censure and satire Macaulay was subjected to, but the indecision and confusion of those mocking attacks. For closer examination of the satirical literature on Macaulay exposes rather more about the triumphs she achieved than the ridicule she provoked. Despite her concerns about the puffing system, Macaulay was far from averse to self-promotion, ensuring

simultaneously that she followed scrupulously her theoretical model of fame and authorial position advocated in her writings.

Contemporary artistic representations of Macaulay are numerous and both satirical and serious. Most radical, however, and the piece of art that caused the most consternation was the statue erected of her by her friend and admirer Dr Thomas Wilson in St Stephen's Church, Walbrook, in London. The statue, which can now be found at the public library in Warrington, is actually named as 'History', but Catharine Macaulay's fame was such that, even if the congregation had not had the benefit of the inscriptions, they would have been only too aware of whom the monument sought to embody. The erection of the statue was reported with detailed excitement in September 1777:

On Monday was completely finished, and erected in a marble niche, or recess, properly decorated, in the chancel of St Stephen, Walbrook, London, a superb white marble statue, in honour of that celebrated Lady, Mrs Macaulay, in the character of History, in a singular easy and pleasing antique stile, and judged to be a good likeness; has a pen in her right hand, apparently as if she had just finished some lines written on a scroll she holds in her left, on which she leans on her five volumes of the History of England, viz.,

GOVERNMENT  
is a Power  
delegated for the  
HAPPINESS of  
MANKIND,  
when conducted by  
WISDOM, JUSTICE,  
and MERCY.

At the left side of the stone she stands on is J.F. Moore Delin. & Sculp. Under which is a white marble table, where on one side is written in capital letters,

You speak of Mrs MACAULAY:  
She is a Kind of Prodigy!  
I revere her Abilities;  
I cannot bear to hear her name sarcastically mentioned;  
I would have her taste the exalted Pleasure of universal  
Applause;  
I would have STATUES erected to her Memory;



once in every Age I could wish  
 Such a Woman to appear,  
 as a proof that GENIUS is not confined to SEX;  
 but at the same time - you will pardon me -  
 We want no more than  
 ONE MRS MACAULAY

'Late Lord Lyttelton's Letters to Mrs Peach', p.114.

On the other side of the same table, at the top, is left a blank space  
 (we suppose) for an Epitaph, and under which is as follows:

Erected by THOMAS WILSON, DD Rector of this Parish,  
 as a Testimony of the high Esteem he bears to the distinguished  
 Merit of his friend

CATHARINE MACAULAY  
 AD MDCCLXXVII.<sup>23</sup>

I quote the article in full to recreate the way the statue would have been presented to a contemporary audience across Britain in order to revitalize critical debate about the reception accorded to a monument erected to a living famous person. For recent analyses of the statue's importance have carelessly filled in the 'blank space' left '(we suppose) for an Epitaph' with suggestions that, far from representing a flatteringly triumphant model of celebrated femininity, the controversy surrounding Macaulay's likeness did nothing but harm to her public image and reputation.<sup>24</sup>

For the fact that the statue had been erected to a woman was the last thing to disturb Macaulay's contemporaries. As Elizabeth Carter succinctly puts it, if Wilson wanted to unveil a monument 'as high as that which Nebuchadnezzar placed on the plains of Dura, nobody has any thing to do with it'. Not only does the representation seem acceptable, it is actually more than justly deserved for a woman displaying Macaulay's talents. For Carter, the most distressing aspect of the statue was the erroneously attributed epistolary sentiments: 'to choose his inscription from a book written by two nameless writers and then call these writers Lord Lyttelton and Mrs Peach is such an instance of absurdity and

impertinence as one shall not often meet with'.<sup>25</sup> Misquotation is bad enough, but Carter also implies that Macaulay herself has been done an injustice by the lack of a correct and suitable inscription to her fame and abilities. 'Crito', a correspondent to the Gentleman's Magazine, makes similar claims to Carter, denying the authority of the quotation.<sup>26</sup> Others express more concern about Wilson's propriety in erecting a statue in a church in the first place. Its presence immediately provokes comment from the Vestry at St Stephen's, but according to the minutes, very little action was taken to remove it despite requests. Deadlines come and go. The action begins in November 1777, barely two months after the erection. A letter written soon after to insist that Wilson 'remove the monument from the Church, or signify on or before the 19th Day of Dec. next that he will do so' clearly had very little effect. By the 24th December, there is a suggestion that legal proceedings will be initiated against Wilson. In August the following year, the plea is still being made for removal of the statue. Eventually removed by Wilson himself some time after Macaulay's controversial second marriage, the date of removal is still uncertain.<sup>27</sup> Whatever the reason, whether Wilson was jealous of the remarriage of his idol, or whether he was afraid, as an issue of the Gentleman's Magazine of 1791 suggests, of the Vestry about to 'cit[e] him to the Commons for it', Macaulay's position as a highly prominent public and publicized woman seems to be accepted and completely irrelevant to the arguments about the presence of the statue.<sup>28</sup>

The greatest concern expressed by Macaulay's contemporaries was the dedication of a monument to a living person. For, by having a monument erected to her during her lifetime, Macaulay was seen in some way to be cheating posterity. As already discussed, the notion of posterity was being replaced by the desire for the more instantaneous thrill

of contemporary celebration. Some, however, were clearly not ready to deal with the changing conceptualization of fame. By having such a solid artistic representation of her created while still alive, Macaulay not only effectively embodied the increasing feminization of fame, but actively secured her reputation at a time when to be awarded laurels and glorified when alive to appreciate it was all. The same 'Crito', who had complained to the Gentleman's Magazine about the Lytteltonian misquotation further expresses anger (intriguingly not towards Macaulay herself) about the statue's presumptuous representation of a classically dressed contemporary in a place of worship: 'what will the world think of a Christian divine, who not only turns his church into a Heathen temple, but makes it the vehicle of falsehood to posterity?'.<sup>29</sup> The 1779 satire The Female Patriot. An Epistle from C---t---e M---c---y to the Reverend Dr W---l---n. On her late Marriage suggests similar confusion over the statue's contemporaneity. The Critical, Historical and Philosophical Notes and Illustrations accompanying the text reveal great concern with Macaulay's ability to direct her celebrated name and control public and artistic representations of her person. The 'living Catharine's' 'famous statue' is erected

Lest Catharine's image should dissolve in dust,  
At thy command unprose my sculptur'd bust;  
In Walbrook's isle I frown'd in marbled state,  
And triumph'd, when alive, o'er future Fate (ll.167-70).

Questioning, in a footnote, 'the religion and legality of this dedication of a monument to a living person', the author acknowledges smugly that with the removal of the statue 'Posterity will never be gratified with the sight of this extraordinary spectacle of superstitious Pride; for, after having been exposed for some time to the publick eye, it was then covered, and about three months ago entirely removed' (p.18).



The Female Patriot is, however, haunted by the very reality of the statue and the level of cultural importance it represents. For, it is increasingly irrelevant to refer to the 'superstitious' nature of the monument when it has not only entered the cultural consciousness, being 'exposed to the publick eye', but in doing so has 'triumph'd' already over 'future Fate'. Text contradicts footnote, which simultaneously collapses under its own flimsy attempts to 'cover' the event from the public. Macaulay's victory is assured, as even the poem is forced to recognize:

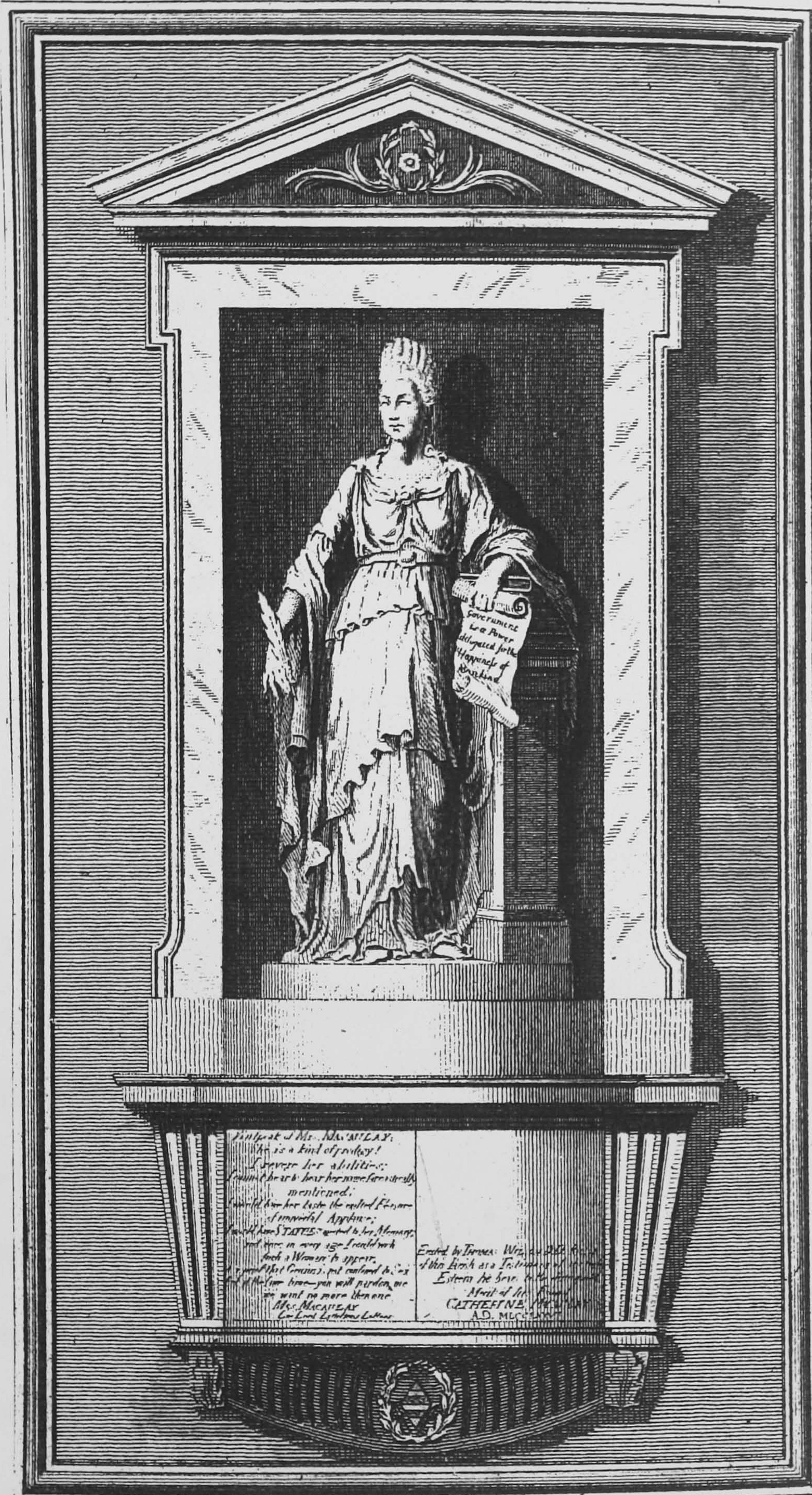
There my proud Statue bade my laurels rise,  
And waft the fair Historian to the skies;  
There my plum'd epitaph with borrow'd name  
Aspir'd my female trophies to proclaim.  
What tho' invidious Priestcraft should arraign  
This pious deed in Friendship's sacred fane,  
And, lest Idolatry pollute the land,  
Forbid my marbled effigy to stand:  
Yet in spite of churchmen's mean contracted soul  
No superstition can my fame control (ll.171-80).

The solidity of the monument, its 'marbled', 'sculptur'd' state belies the poem's attempts to erase Macaulay's high contemporary value. The satirical attempt at exposure of folly instead serves only to expose Catharine Macaulay's public prominence and afford her greater publicity.

Neither were all the reactions to the statue as mocking or disdainful as Macaulay critics have assumed. A lengthy article in the October issue of the popular mainstream journal, the Lady's Magazine, provides vehement, unconditional female support for the monument.<sup>30</sup> Accompanying the article is also an engraving of the actual statue, inscriptions intact, ensuring the Macaulay representation double circulation among the vast readership of the Lady's (figure II). The reproduction of the 'elegant piece of statuary, [which] has given such a stimulation to curiosity' is presented to the reader as an



*Engraved for the Lady's Magazine.*



The Statue of M.<sup>rs</sup> Macaulay erected in the Church  
of S.<sup>t</sup> Stephen Walbrook, London, at the Expence of  
D.<sup>r</sup> Wilson the Rector.

Figure II The Statue of Mrs Macaulay erected in the Church of St Stephen Walbrook, London, in Lady's Magazine (1777).



enticing gift which the magazine is 'obliging' the readers 'with a copy of [ . . . ], as a fresh token of the ardour with which [they] embrace every opportunity to deserve their protection and encouragement' (p.509). Catharine Macaulay's reputation and cultural standing is clearly such that not only is a picture of her an extremely desirable collectable item, but a genuinely delightful reward for supporting the endeavours of the magazine. The accompanying article cleverly refutes the charges against Wilson and simultaneously elevates Macaulay even higher:

As for the charge of prostituting the dignity of the church, it may be easily answered, that the tokens of gratitude seem most properly to be reposit[ed] within the walls, whose service is dedicated to inspire, to cherish, and to perpetuate that virtue. - As for the charge of giving a handle to idolatry, it is as puerile as it is malicious; the protestant principles of the doctor are too well known to give the least ground to such a charge, and the stigma might with equal propriety be applied to every statue in Westminster Abbey (p.510).

'The charge of impropriety on account of erecting a statue to a person in their life time' is also exposed as farcical by the Lady's. Defending Macaulay's right, after her historical 'labours', those 'ornament[s] to the nation', to the 'finest' statue possible, the magazine points the 'classical reader' to the 'history of Cornelius Nepos' (p.509; p.510; p.509; p.510). Drawing attention to the 'most civilized states of antiquity', who 'erected no less than a hundred statues to a living hero', the Lady's effectively supports Macaulay by inverting masculinized arguments. The modern difference, however, is all too easily hinted at by the accompanying illustration and the knowledge that the circulation figures for this Macaulian panegyric would far exceed any visibility available to the heroes of antiquity.

Far from expressing horror at such contemporary rewards, Macaulay herself



advocates, in Letters on Education, a celebration in marble for the deserving few. The final letter of Part II, 'Hints towards rendering the fine Arts subservient to Religion', concludes by performing nothing but:

In order, Hortensia, to impress the more strongly on the people's minds the superiority of benevolence, to that of any other virtue; No statue, bust, or monument, should be permitted a place in the church, but of those citizens who have been especially useful in the mitigating the woes attendant on animal life; or who have been the authors of any invention, by which the happiness of man, or brute, may be rationally improved (p.336).

Placed in an treatise for educational improvements that will benefit all levels of society, a work proposing that 'the education of the great, were it properly attended to, and pursued on the best rules, would be felt in the improved virtue of all the subordinate classes of citizens', it is difficult not to see the support for living monuments as a cleverly positioned puff ('Preface', v-vi). By expressing how contemporary glorification should be enjoyed, Macaulay was no different from her fellow eighteenth-century female writers. One of the Nine Living Muses of Great Britain, as painted by Richard Samuel, Macaulay's vivid image would not only reach audiences at the gallery where it was shown, but the resulting engravings would reach a far wider, eclectic audience. Tellingly, Macaulay is ~~the~~ represented as the figure sitting at the foot of and becoming almost one with a female statue (figure III). As Elizabeth Montagu comments gleefully to Elizabeth Carter on their representations when reproduced in Johnson's Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum for 1778:

it is charming to think how our praises will ride about the world in every bodies pocket. Unless we could be put into a popular ballad, set to a favourite old English tune, I do not see how we could become so universally celebrated. We might have lived in an age in which we should never have had ye pleasure of seeing our features, or characters, in Pocket books, Magazines, Museums, literary [*sic.*] & monthly reviews,



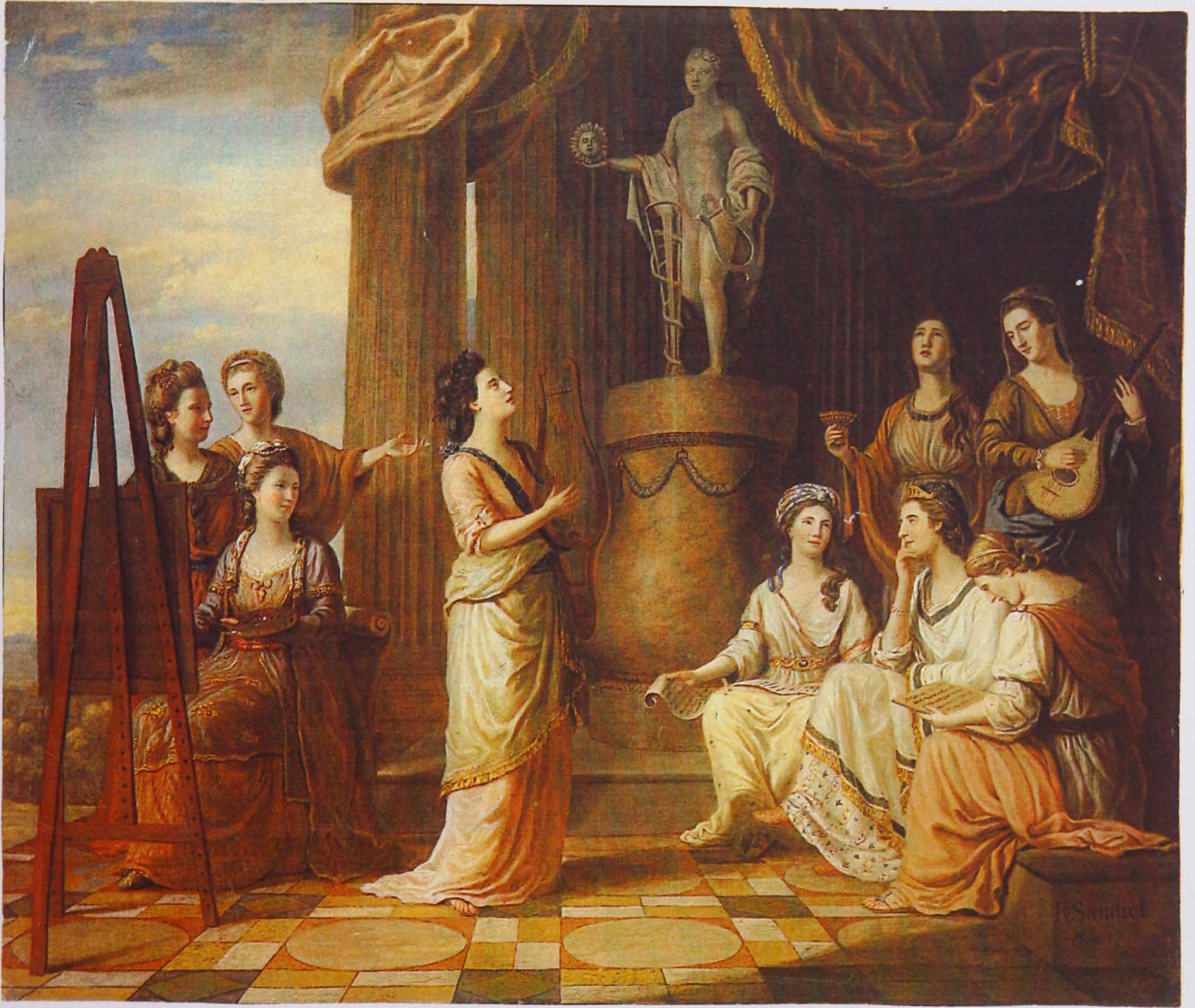


Figure III Richard Samuel, The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain (c.1779). Oil on canvas, 132.1 cm by 154.9 cm.



Annual Registers, &c &c &c. You, who may look to future & posthumous fame, may despise the weekly, monthly, or annual registers but for a poor little Grisette of a Commentator, who only aspired to brush off a little dust & some Cobwebs with which time & filthy spiders had disgraced the Bays of a great Poet, I think it extraordinary felicity even to enjoy a little brief celebrity, & contracted fame.<sup>31</sup>

Not even Montagu's self-deprecating tone can hide the intense delight the idea of contemporary celebrity brings her. Despite her friend's reservations, Elizabeth Carter felt the same about her glorification: 'I am just as sensible of present fame as you can be. Your Virgils and your Horaces may talk what they will of posterity, but I think it is much better to be celebrated by the men, women, and children, among whom one is actually living and looking'.<sup>32</sup> Unafraid of publicity, Carter, Montagu, and Macaulay herself enjoy the thrill of their famed status and popular reception. Fame becomes, as Macaulay suggests at the very outset of her History of England, infinitely desirable: 'the only reward which, in the present times, true virtue hath to hope' ('Introduction', History, I, viii).

The critical concentration upon the artistic representations of Catharine Macaulay have tended to obscure the ambiguities inherent in this representation and Macaulay's attitude to the nature of Greek and Roman fame. As already discussed, Macaulay held certain suspicions about the suitability of female martyrdom through self-sacrifice, as embodied in the figure of Arria. In Letters on Education, Macaulay examines the obsession with creating a posthumous name in antiquity. Far from offering these ideals wholehearted support, she is scornful of the public effects of supposedly beneficial heroic and military deaths. Alexander receives the brunt of Macaulay's criticism:

the Greeks do not appear to have been much acquainted with those moral qualities which form the virtue and glory of rational



agents.

Alexander [. . .] confined these so entirely to the success of arms, that, in a rage for fame, he filled almost every corner of the known world with his violencies. Full of the intoxicating fumes of a vain glory, he envied his father the reputation he had acquired for that success which laid the foundation of his own greatness. He put whole societies of men to death for having the insolence to defend themselves against his arms. In his anger, he spared neither the faithfulest of his friends, nor the most intimate of his companions; and, in the uproar of a wild debauch, at the motion of an infamous prostitute, he set on fire, with his own hands, and burnt to ashes, the city of Persepolis, which was without pallel for its magnitude and beauty (p.247).

The quest for military glory, the uncontrolled 'rage for fame' proves inflammatory, resulting in nothing but wasted opportunities, pointless and terrifying death and destruction. The Romans, 'seduced' from 'that moderation and humanity for which they had been hitherto signalised' into fighting to become 'masters of the world' and attain the reputations of martial heroes, 'complete[s] the corruption and depravity of Roman manners' (p.253). In Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810 Harriet Guest suggests that Macaulay's choice to represent herself as a Roman matron on the frontispiece to Volume III of the History of England detracts not only from her femininity but the appeal of her public image (figure IV):

Macaulay is framed with a garland of oak leaves, which, in contrast to, say, a laurel wreath is distinctively military and heroic in its implications. [. . .] Macaulay's decision to represent herself as the pseudomilitary scourge of modern corruption, marks the idealism of her patriotism, the female Brutus who values liberty more than natural affection, but it may also characterize it as premodern or uncivilized in its inhuman or antifeminine severity.<sup>33</sup>

On the contrary, I read this image as a deliberate attempt not only to offer a modern twist on 'heroism', but in doing so, ironically to embody and thus supersede the old notions of glory: a pictorial representation of the feminization of fame in the eighteenth century.





Figure IV Frontispiece to Catharine Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line, III (1767)



Poems celebrating Macaulay and even satirical skits make this point in a similar fashion. While Catharine Macaulay may appear as a Roman matron, there are subtle differences in the way she controls her image. In Eleutheria: A Poem Inscribed to Mrs Macaulay, published in 1768, Eleutheria is sent by the gods to 'save that island [Great Britain] from th[e] dreadful evils' with which it is gripped:

Corruption, Luxury, Venality,  
Division, Vanity, and fell Oppression,  
O'erwhelm the land.<sup>34</sup>

'RESOLVING, for a while, to fix her seat / amongst us mortals, whom she would instruct / In the high arts of a free government', Eleutheria searches London for a 'FORM to dwell in'. A surprisingly modern goddess, Eleutheria knows just how to advertise for her potential embodiment, engaging in the social whirl and having flattering images of her distributed: 'Many friends she saw, / & left her lovely picture in Pall-Mall'. Eventually happening upon Catharine Macaulay, the goddess enters into 'this bright FORM', this 'breast replete with virtues all divine' and pronounces satisfaction: 'her ORACLES she would now give / From the well-guided pen of fair MACAULAY' (p.8). Although seeming to usurp Macaulay's pen, it is Eleutheria who disappears. Creative and political sentiments come from the pen of the highly visible and easily recognized Macaulay. The goddess of antiquity and her sentiments are modernized by her cultural surroundings and her choice of a contemporary form 'to dwell in'.

An Irregular Ode, the second of Six Odes Presented to That justly-celebrated HISTORIAN Mrs. CATHARINE MACAULAY, ON HER BIRTH-DAY, & publicly read to a polite and brilliant Audience, presents an 'assembly of the Celestials' choosing Macaulay as the most deserving 'among the present race of Authors' for instant celebrity:



'FAME shall proclaim this decision and PUBLIC VIRTUE erect the unperishable column to her memory'.<sup>35</sup> Macaulay not only embodies ancient values, but actually improves upon them for political and cultural effect: 'In her fair pages Spartan virtue shines; / With Roman valour glow her nervous lines', but 'New were her thoughts, her nervous language new, [. . .] Her only boast, to lead fair Freedom's train; - / The path of public happiness to trace' (p.26; p.22). The contemporary laurels conferred upon Catharine Macaulay represent a 'new' form of fame: a form that fitted all too impressively around the neck of the 'celebrated female historian'.

As a living embodiment of female achievement Macaulay was seen especially by her female contemporaries as an inspiration: a force for political and social change. Two poems from the 1770s place Macaulay firmly at the zenith of fame. Far from suffering a decline in reputation in the 1770s the name of Catharine Macaulay was ever in the minds of those wishing to celebrate female talent and to provide living, exemplary women as models for the younger generation. In Mary Scott's Female Advocate (1774), the author seeks to replace the 'wreath of Fame', which due to male intervention, has slipped too easily from the necks of exalted females.<sup>36</sup> Emboldened by female support, Scott feels able to assert the cultural centrality of the famous woman and defend her use of combative language to prove her point: 'I believe I am expressing myself with warmth, but I cannot help it; for when I speak or write on this subject, I feel an indignation which I cannot, and which I indeed do not wish to suppress' (vi). Approaching Catharine Macaulay with the reticence of a besotted admirer Scott offers her the highest form of celebration: emulation:

But thou MACAULAY; say, canst thou excuse  
The fond presumption of a youthful Muse?

A Muse, that, raptur'd with thy growing fame,  
 Wishes (at least) to celebrate thy name;  
 A name to ev'ry son of freedom dear,  
 Which patriots yet unborn shall long revere (ll.313-24).

Enthralled by the famous name of Catharine Macaulay, Scott acknowledges not only her importance in inspiring female contemporaries to embark upon their own literary careers, but the profundity of her ideological contribution to late eighteenth-century Britain. In similar fashion, Mary Seymour Montague's An Original Essay on Women (1771), which aims to reveal how men '[d]eny the Truth, and meanly filch [women's] fame' both acknowledges its debt to Macaulay and lauds her achievements:

But how Macauley [*sic*]! shall I speak thy Praise,  
 The Theme to equal, how exalt my Lays!  
 What diction can thy just applause convey!  
 Thy Merit, what energetic Thought display!  
 Language and Thought like thine alone must show  
 The countless Thanks we to Thy Talents owe:  
 Sublime ideas in a beauteous Dress,  
 Which Angels might conceive and Saints express.  
 Majestic Pomp in ev'ry Line appears,  
 Expressive softness in ev'ry Scruple clears:  
 Magnificence enchanting Plainness joins,  
 Loads not, but gilds; expels not, but refines.  
 Prose rich as Poetry, the Bosom warms,  
 Reason convinces and Description charms.  
 Summons your male Historians, lordly Man,  
 Then search the Group, and match her if you can.  
 The Search were vain, her Equal is not known,  
 And future Writers shall the Pattern own.<sup>37</sup>

Seymour Montague's use of regal metaphors to laud the republican Macaulay may seem ironic, but effectively emphasize her ascendancy over not only over her male rivals but also over those who should be protecting the interests of the British people: king and government. The figure of Catharine Macaulay in these panegyrics elides the difference, closes the gaps Macaulay herself believed were inherent in Rousseauvian fame, and

effects the transition between theory and practice to which she aspires. influencing and inspiring women especially with her writing to seek fame for themselves and create their own revolutions.

### **Coda: Rewriting the Satirical Script**

If the name Catharine Macaulay was barely remembered during the nineteenth century, her life, writings, and those of her admirers reveal even more acutely the powerful impact she made upon her contemporaries as an achiever, in late eighteenth-century terms, of the most coveted form of fame. During her lifetime 'the Celebrated Female Historian' may have presented an easy satirical target, but the satire she provoked was far less at ease with its subject. For Macaulay would not behave as satirists were so convinced she would in public: she refused to be manipulated by the eighteenth-century media. Macaulay's marriage in 1779 to William Graham, twenty-one year old brother of the notorious quack Dr James Graham, provoked intense and scurrilous attacks upon the lusty sexual appetites of the merry widow. A Remarkable Moving Letter! and The Female Patriot (1779) both reveal a satirical desire to shape a character who remains unbending in the attempt. The sexual punning on Macaulay's texts in the former,<sup>38</sup> only serves to reemphasize her professional achievements, while despite the belief of the latter that 'the Fair Patriot in the struggle between Ambition and Love however reluctant yields to the latter' is forced in the same sentence to acknowledge that 'it is now whispered in the ear of the Publick, that in defiance of law she still adheres to her former appellation, and



subscribes herself Catharine M---c---y' (p.9). Macaulay, however, has it both ways and not only signs her name Catharine Macaulay Graham, but refuses to sacrifice ambition for love and continues to publish right up until her death. Far from suffering a decline in reputation, the final volume of the History of England was received as a remarkable achievement:

[this work] must be allowed to afford one of the most signal instances ever known to the literary world, of extraordinary abilities and persevering exertions of a female writer. Several other ladies have figured with deserved applause in the works of imagination; but none, except the present, has had the boldness to contend for the palm in the field of history. If, in this arduous undertaking, her ambition was too great to be fully gratified, she has at least established an indisputable claim to uncommon genius and admiration.<sup>39</sup>

As Macaulay claims in her shrewd response to the critics in Volume VI of the History, the first volume to be published after her remarriage, when 'personal invective supplies the place of argument, and the reputation of authors are attacked in order to decry their writings',

it is a very strong symptom in favour of these productions against which the battery of abuse is levelled and in this case an individual, in the full enjoyment of that internal satisfaction which a faithful exertion of mental abilities affords the rational mind, must look down with contempt on the angry crowd, nor suffer their fierce and loud clamours, in any respect, to divert him from pursuing the grand object his honest ambition ('Preface', xiv).

Refusing to succumb to the taunts of satirists, the eyes of Macaulay were on far higher personal and political goals. In similar fashion to the seventeenth-century Lady Russell she so admired in her History of England, Catharine Macaulay survived to see the benefits of becoming a living monument.

## Chapter III

### Mary Robinson and the 'splendour of a name'<sup>1</sup>

On 23rd March 1775, Frances Burney noted in her journal an unexpected sighting of a popular celebrity, glimpsed while out walking in the streets of London with her sister Susanna:

Yesterday morning, as Susette and I were returning from Mr Burney, we met the celebrated Actress, Mrs Abington, walking and alone, in Tavistock Street. Susy proposed our turning back & following her; the weather was beautiful, & [we] accordingly Traced her Foot steps, which were made very leisurely, as she looked at all the Caps as she passed.<sup>2</sup>

Burney's gossipy account focuses attention on several aspects of eighteenth-century female celebrity. Most noticeably, Mrs Abington is instantly visible and recognizable to the Burney sisters, although they are personally unacquainted with the actress. Once identified, the desire to know more about her movements and pursuits compels the Burneys to follow her discretely and pay careful attention to her confident manoeuvres as a powerfully conspicuous leading consumer of fashionable items among the shops of the metropolis in the 1770s. Frances and Susanna Burney's reactions to the public appearance of a famous woman raise a number of questions about the mechanics of fame in the eighteenth century, how the 'following' of a celebrity was aided not only by her literal visibility, but by the multi-media proliferation of her image throughout the increasingly sophisticated print culture of the late eighteenth century. Mary Robinson, Mrs Abington's younger contemporary on the London stage, played a prominent part in the fame game, both as a newspaper writer commenting upon metropolitan mores and as



a renowned actress and courtesan. Robinson's shrewd manipulation of the discourses of fame helped not only to grant her publicity as a notorious actress and mistress, but also, later, as a literary celebrity.

#### **i. A 'well-known Fair One'<sup>3</sup>**

Mary Robinson, as a prominent *scandaleuse* of the last decades of the eighteenth century, received intense public attention and scrutiny before, during and after her well-publicized affairs with, among others, the young Prince of Wales, Charles James Fox and Colonel Banastre Tarleton, hero of the American War and later Member of Parliament for Liverpool.<sup>4</sup> Born in Bristol in 1758, Robinson experienced a peripatetic childhood, due mainly to the elaborate schemes of her adventurer merchant father and eventually ended up in London, where her precocious intellectual talents and appearance attracted the attention of numerous libertines, as well as David Garrick, who recognized in her a perfect Cordelia for his *Lear*. An early marriage at the age of fourteen to lawyer Thomas Robinson, the profligate illegitimate son of a Welsh landowner, put pay, for the moment, to her acting ambitions, which were resumed when Thomas Robinson, who had already cost his wife and child a spell in a debtor's prison, further exhausted the family's financial resources. In 1781, Robinson played Perdita in a production of The Winter's Tale, which earned her this lifelong nickname, as well as the amorous attentions of the future George IV. An actress turned courtesan, poet, novelist, playwright, translator, feminist polemicist, journalist, and autobiographer, Robinson rarely escaped the penetrating glare

of celebrity, appearing with almost predictable regularity in the daily newspapers and monthly periodicals of the 1780s and 1790s. Robinson's name, for example, appeared at least half a dozen times in every issue of the Rambler's Magazine for 1783.<sup>5</sup> At the height of her fame as an actress in the early 1780s, Robinson was painted by all the famous portraitists of the day, including Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough, and her image was endlessly copied and reproduced, percolating down from the salons of high art to the engraved prints of Grub Street, available to all for a few shillings. In 1814, sports writer Pierce Egan, in his satirical account of the relationship between Robinson and the Prince of Wales, estimated that her face was recognised even in the frozen wilds of Russia, due to an intoxicating combination of '[b]rilliance of talent, and publicity of character'.<sup>6</sup> She became a fashion icon, flaunting her status as consumer and producer of luxury goods, importing the latest French fashions and then publicizing her garments by appearing at all the major attractions of fashionable London society, where her daring dresses seduced both sexes, were enviously copied by her female onlookers, and received columns of coverage in the 'bon ton' sections of the printed press. Robinson's increasingly costly and elaborate carriages, which she chose to drive herself around the streets of London, were dwelt upon with minute and loving attention in the media, for anyone who wished to recognize the celebrated actress in person.

Robinson's prominence and visibility ensured that she was often mobbed in the streets by her adoring fans, or by curious or censorious onlookers. Even the most mundane tasks became difficult to accomplish without the presence of a crowd to catch a glimpse of Robinson's latest purchase. 'Whenever I appeared in public', claims Robinson in her posthumously published Memoirs of 1801:



I was overwhelmed by the gazing of the multitude. I was frequently obliged to quit Ranelagh, owing to the crowd which staring curiosity had assembled round my box; and even in the streets of the metropolis, I scarcely ventured to enter a shop without experiencing the greatest inconvenience. Many hours have I waited till the crowd dispersed, which surrounded my carriage, in expectation of my quitting the shop. I cannot suppress a smile at the absurdity of such proceeding, when I remember that, during nearly three seasons, I was almost every night upon the stage, and that I had then been nearly five years with Mr Robinson at every fashionable place of entertainment.<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to Robinson's apparent discomfort with public pursuit in this quotation, other passages in the Memoirs hint that she was not averse to exploiting her famous status for her own gain, presenting more instances of fame-seeking than fame-avoidance. Acting held no fears for the teenage Robinson, and while her mother trembled at 'the perils, the temptations to which an unprotected girl would be exposed in so public a situation', Robinson was starry-eyed, 'contemplating a thousand triumphs, in which [her] vanity would be publicly gratified' (p.35). A critical and popular success on the stage, Robinson described the seductive 'new sensation' of the 'attainment of fame': 'My benefit was flatteringly attended: the boxes were filled with persons of the very highest rank and fashion; and I looked forward with delight both to celebrity and to fortune' (p.89; p.90). Even when she left the stage, Robinson's main regrets, signalled in the precedence she had already given to fame above fortune, were not the supposed loss of income from her lucrative time as an actress, but the diminution of the 'most gratifying testimonies of public approbation' which fed her insatiable desire for celebrity. As Robinson realized from her continuing encounters with admirers, however, fame could be channelled through other powerful outlets. The crowds following the notorious actress were spurred on by '[t]he daily prints' and their 'scandalous paragraphs', an action Robinson rather

unconvincingly labelled as 'unaccountable instances of national absurdity'. While seemingly critical of the effects produced upon the masses by newspaper hype, Robinson also made the important point in the Memoirs that late eighteenth-century fame was not bound by class distinction. '[A] less worthy mortal', claims Robinson, 'might be worshipped as the idol of its day, if whispered into notoriety by the comments of the multitude' (pp.113-14).

### **iii. How to become famous; or the Art of the Eighteenth-Century 'Puff'**

The late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century press was a burgeoning industry, contributing to the continuing expansion of print culture and consequently readership, as well as firmly establishing the foundations of journalism as a lucrative profession and the journalist as an invaluable promoter or detractor of the latest celebrity. Unlike the other writers examined in this study or indeed any other writer of this period, Mary Robinson occupied the unique position of being both reader and writer: a scrutinized object of the press gaze and a ruthless participant in the same penetrating glare. A contributor of poems to papers and journals such as the World and the Oracle in the 1780s and 1790s, Robinson took over the reigns of the editorship of the poetry section of the Morning Post in 1799, one of the best-selling dailies, from Robert Southey.<sup>8</sup> Her successor would be Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The willingness of aspiring and established writers to contribute to the newspaper and periodical trade reveals its importance in the construction of the authorial persona in the literary marketplace at this



time. Mary Robinson did not simply provide and assess poetry for the press, however, but actively contributed articles, at the end of her exceptionally public career, providing social and literary commentary on her beloved adopted home: London. Her essays on the capital, published in the newly-established radical journal the Monthly Magazine and British Register, were grouped under the title 'Present State of the Manners, Society, &c. &c. of the Metropolis of England' and offer a sparkling panorama of London, as well as an incisive analysis of the contribution of print culture to the nation. Established in February 1796 by Joseph Johnson and Richard Phillips, the Monthly Magazine was designed specifically for the increasing numbers of an intelligent middle-class reading public, who professed 'liberal principles' and had 'been either deserted or virulently opposed by other Periodical Miscellanies'.<sup>9</sup> The contributors to the journal were also paid often double the rate of other, older periodicals.<sup>10</sup>

Robinson's 'Metropolitan Essays' appeared between August and November 1800 and celebrate the vibrancy of literary life in London, the tremendous social and political impact of print culture, and its bolstering of the careers of the famous. In the August essay Robinson offers a tableau of the capital as 'the busy mart of literary traffick', where '[i]ts public libraries, its multitudes of authors, its diurnal publications, and its scenes of dramatic ordeal, all contribute to the important task of enlarging and embellishing the world of letters' and where 'the press daily teems with works of genius' (X, 35-36). The metropolis inspires and nurtures not only writers, however, but encourages the development of a discerning, sophisticated reading audience: 'the public eye is ever on the watch for productions of every species, calculated either to amuse, instruct, astonish, or enlighten. It is true, that the hoards of vapid writers are multitudinous: but the

judgment of the public turns with disgust from the dull, the vain, the feeble [. . .] – while it fosters and draws forth the genuine [. . .] effusions of genius, learning, and philosophy' (36). Within this tightly woven, harmonious contract between writer and audience, coupled with the cultivating and cultivated metropolitan context, and with the 'frigid[ity]' of aristocratic patronage, 'the tree of knowledge has flourished spontaneously', enabling a veritable republic of letters, and, of celebrity, whereby '[l]iterature, in all its branches, has claimed the laurel; and the distinctions of fame have not been confined either to rank, sex, or profession' (36). The sole facilitating contact between the parties inevitably the press:

There were never so many monthly and diurnal publications as the present period; and to the perpetual novelty which issues from the press may in a great measure, be attributed to the expansion of mind, which daily evinces itself among all classes of the people. The monthly miscellanies are read by the middling orders of society, by the literati; *and sometimes by the loftiest of our nobility*. The daily prints fall into the hands of all classes; they display the temper of all classes; they display the temper of the times; the intricacies of political manoeuvre; the opinions of the learned, the enlightened, and the patriotic. [. . .] Political controversy and literary discussions are only rendered of utility to mankind by the spirit of emulative contention. The press is the mirror where folly may see its own likeness, and vice contemplates the magnitude of its deformity. It also presents a tablet of manners; and a transcript of the temper of mankind; a check on the gigantic strides of innovation; and a bulwark which REASON has raised, and, it is to be hoped, TIME will consecrate, round the altar of immortal liberty (X [November 1800], 305).

The exclusion of the illiterate, anachronistic aristocracy from the republic of letters is not only noted but heavily emphasised by Robinson in this account of the revolutionary effects the expansion of print culture has had upon the metropolis and, consequently, the British nation. In such a propitious, egalitarian climate for the celebrity writer to work



with and for the press, fame replaces social status as the new, 'exclusive birthright' (X [October 1800], 220).

These articles, written a few months before she died and firmly affixed with the signature 'M.R', belie the current critical obsession with Mary Robinson's inability to deal with excessive public attention and her hostility towards the press. In Empowering the Feminine, Eleanor Ty characterizes Robinson as an 'object lacking agency' whose identity is gradually lost in direct correlation to her status as a famous person:

Robinson had problems establishing and maintaining herself as a subject partly because of public versions of her, as manifested in the cartoons, gossip, newspaper accounts, and artistic renditions. The public constructed different identities of her, reading her life as a text --- of the tragic actress, the beautiful whore, the transcendent muse, and later the novelist of sensibility.<sup>11</sup>

More recently, within an examination of the shrewdly manipulative eighteenth-century 'Scandalous Memoirists', Lynda M. Thompson relegates Robinson to the position of a timid, publicity-shy precursor of the 'nineteenth-century woman writer [and her] abhorrence of autobiographical revelations'. Discussing Robinson's 1799 feminist polemic A Letter to the Women of England Thompson suggests that, in order to defend herself, Robinson effaced her name from the text, 'remov[ing] her personal experience from the argument, fearing adverse publicity'.<sup>12</sup> As well as an astute commentator on and ardent supporter of the emerging discourse of fame and its social and political implications in the press, Robinson was repeatedly presented in periodicals and newspapers by her contemporaries and colleagues as confident and responsive under the gaze of the media. Far from shrinking from the glare of publicity, Mary Robinson embraced the limelight.

Scandalous journals offered by far the most widespread coverage of Mary Robinson in the 1780s, when her affair with the Prince of Wales ensured her an automatic place in the 'bon ton' social columns of the daily press. The 'bon ton' section of most papers had been extended by the final years of the eighteenth century to the point where it occupied entire publications, so thirsty were the public for the 'amusing' and 'astonishing' aspects of literature that Robinson herself identified in her Monthly Magazine 'Metropolitan Essays'. Representative of these new journals is the Robinson-obsessed Rambler's Magazine. First published in January 1783 and running until 1790, The Rambler's Magazine or The Annals of Gallantry, Glee, Pleasure, and the Bon Ton; Calculated for the Entertainment of the Polite World presented itself as a vastly different 'ramble' through society than that taken by its mid-century Johnsonian predecessor and namesake. The full title drew immediate attention to its expected and ideal reader, gendered exclusively male, the 'Man of Pleasure' for whom the Rambler would 'furnish [. . .] a most delicious banquet of Amorous, Bacchardian, Whimsical, Humorous, Theatrical and Polite Entertainment'. In contrast to similar periodicals of the late eighteenth century often considered scandal sheets, such as the Town and Country Magazine, the Rambler's was exclusively devoted to pleasure and amusement, free from 'dry Reasoning, Metaphysical Conjectures, or Essays on Morality'. '[W]ithout the Restraint of prudish Squeamishness', states the 'Address' prefixed to the first edition of the magazine,

We shall comprehend every Topic that engages the Bon Ton: every Place of public Entertainment will furnish us with Subjects for our Design, as we propose giving the History of every Lady, whom the attracting charms of Gold can conquer, that resorts to any of the Polite Assemblies; as well as the History of every married Lady, who for want of due Attention being paid her at home by her Charo Sposa, forms some little amorous Alliance with a Party without Doors *pour s'amuser*, and to qualify herself for the



Relief very frequently granted by Doctor's Commons: and we shall illustrate the most striking passages of their Histories with elegant Copper-plates, representing the various Situations in those critical Scenes.

Accounts of female misbehaviour would not simply be provided for titillating entertainment, they would also stand as 'Beacons to the unguarded, to prevent their falling a Sacrifice to female Imposition'.<sup>13</sup> Texts would be accompanied by likenesses of the protagonists, identifiable from contemporary portraits, or by some physical characteristic or particularly telling action. The page facing this 'Address' offers an image of the ideal women who fall within the province of the Rambler's observant eye. Due to the especial concentration on 'Theatrical Matters', it is unsurprising that the three women 'preparing to receive company' are recognizably Robinson and two of her actress contemporaries. While one glances at herself in the mirror and the other concerns herself with either putting on or removing her corset, Robinson similarly plays seductively with her garter, but, unlike the other two, she is placed in the foreground of the engraving and meets the gaze of the reader. In an image with three of the most famous women of the day, Robinson's glance draws attention, and thus celebrity, away from the other two, suggesting not only her expected flirtation with the (presumed) male viewer, but her assured complicity with and control over the reproducer of her image. Similarly, in a 'Tête-à-Tête' portrait in the Town and Country Magazine of May 1780, Robinson's likeness differs from those of other women in the same long-running series. While her 'Doating Lover', Sir John Lade, faces Robinson directly and offers the reader a typical silhouette, the 'Dramatic Enchantress' faces the viewer, barely glancing at her partner, instead gazing coyly and seductively at her public.<sup>14</sup>

Further into the January edition of the Rambler's is the imagined discussion between the three, which revolves primarily around the question of publicity and manipulation of the mechanics of fame. One of the actresses interrupts a dialogue between Robinson and the other about their 'amorous careers' with the reminder that 'Paragraph, or puff master general, will presently be here, and we must resolve upon which paragraph we shall choose to be inserted to-morrow'. The suggestion that Robinson's 'puff' be a claim that 'Perdita has absolutely refused a settlement of £1000 per year from the D--- of N---, so strongly is she attached to her devoted and almost adored Florizel [Prince of Wales]' is received by the expert publicist as '[b]ut middling --- however it will rouse Florizel's feelings, and I shall hear from him in consequence of reading that article'. Calculating and ruthlessly strategic, Robinson emerges from this 'Dialogue' as an arch manipulator of her public image, employing the daily prints as tools in her rise to fame and fortune (RM, I [January 1783], 17-19).

The constant display and minute tracking of Robinson through London society by the press allowed her followers to create a reasonably credible picture of her movements and acquaintances. By the end of 1783, the Rambler's was publishing letters purported to be written by the Prince of Wales, declaring his desire for Robinson. 'Discovered' by the anonymous 'Constant Reader', the letters accurately gauged the public fascination with the glamorous actress and her lovers, who had filled the pages of the 'Amorous and Bon Ton' section of the periodical throughout the year. The 'find' consequently made front-page news of the October edition of the Rambler's, with the cunning 'Reader' promising more, if demand is sufficient: 'I am in hopes of procuring more of such *amusantes* for your Magazine, if this finds a place'. Tantalizing the readers, but also flattering their in-



depth knowledge of bon ton matters, the 'Constant Reader' suggested the 'mysterious or uncommon circumstance' contained within the 'sadly torn and greased' letter, 'must be left to the discovery of your sagacious readers'. The implication, of course, is that any reader of the Rambler's can identify the anonymous '*Fair one*' and her 'princely' suitor, easily filling in the thoughtfully provided gaps (RM, I [October 1783], 362-63). Unsurprisingly, the 'Supplement' for the year eagerly introduced another letter, 'relative to the *completion* of the business alluded to in the former', full of ecstatic starred passages replacing the 'sighs of joy and close embraces' supposedly indulged in by the Prince and Robinson (RM, I, 493).

Other reader submissions took more poetic forms. The Rambler's particularly encouraged its readers, intriguingly, considering its mission statement, of both sexes, to provide pieces in the spirit of the magazine: 'Assistance of such Gentlemen and Ladies as are able and willing to contribute towards its Exertion (either by furnishing Hints, Anecdotes, or finished Histories, Essays, Poems, &c) will be most thankfully received by addressing their Favours to the Publisher'. Gossipy tales, which offered 'Wit, Mirth, Gallantry, and the Bon Ton' in the form of either a 'Choice-Spirit-Song, Epigram, Double Entendre, Toast, Riddle, Catch, or Glea', were paid in kind by receiving a free copy of the Rambler's Magazine.<sup>15</sup> Predictably, the 'Poetry' section, tellingly placed just before the 'Amorous and Bon Ton Intelligence', is primarily concerned with the exploits of the famous. Robinson features heavily, pointing to the fascination she exerted over periodical readers of the 1780s. In the October issue, one of the 'Poems', 'Royal Florizel: A New Song', submitted by one W.Stone, ostensibly presented a more romantic view of the relationship between the Prince and Robinson:

Each rock and sunny hill,  
 E'en *Windsor's* meads and groves,  
 Shall say *Perdita* loves;  
 & echo shall be taught to tell  
 The charms of beauteous Florizel.

W.Stone hints more subtly than the 'Constant Reader', however, at Robinson's reliance upon and influence over the publicity machine. While even the landscape and the metropolitan streets pictured in the poem seem to be enriched by Robinson's love for the Prince, it is noticeable that it is an educated 'echo' which will prove most efficacious in publicizing their relationship. The fifth and final stanza of Stone's 'Song' confirms its more discreet theme, switching to the first person:

The *modern* gods that dwell  
 Around this sacred square  
 Shall wonder how I dare  
 With ev'ry sound conspire to tell,  
 The *charms* of beauteous *Florizel* (RM, I [October 1783], 435).

Bold and only too audible, Robinson's self-generated 'echoes' here take every form and method of publication possible.

Letters from readers did not go unanswered either. Robinson herself, at this early stage in her career, recognized the power of public image and regularly corrected the images she perceived as incorrect or which would damage her reputation, revealing her intense obsession with the press and the scrupulous attention with which she followed the progress of her celebrity. On 25 August 1779, inspired by Robinson's appearance as Jacintha, a breeches part, in The Suspicious Husband, 'Squib' wrote to The Morning Post to comment on Richard Brinsley Sheridan's excessive attention to the young actress. 'Mrs Robinson is to the full, as beautiful as Mrs Cuyler', he enthused, 'and Mrs Robinson has not been overlooked; the manager of Drury Lane *has pushed her forward*'. Responding



to this slanderous double entendre, Robinson cleverly placed emphasis upon the correspondent's anonymity, contrasting it continually with her own famous and visible name. 'Mrs Robinson presents her compliments to Squib, and desires that the next time he desires to exercise his *wit*, it may not be at her expense. Conscious of the rectitude of her conduct, both in public and private, Mrs Robinson does not feel herself the least hurt, at the illnatured sarcasms of an anonymous detractor'.<sup>16</sup> When the papers mistakenly announced her death in 1786 and began to issue biographical accounts in her memory, Robinson was swift to respond, correcting the mistakes in her obituaries and reminding readers of her name and associations.<sup>17</sup> Interacting with her audience, Robinson enhanced her visibility and managed her fame in the newspapers and periodical press.

The most pointed analysis of the Mary Robinson 'fame machine' appeared anonymously in 1784 under the provocative title The Memoirs of Perdita; Interspersed with Anecdotes of the Hon. Charles F---x; Lord M---; Col. T---; P---e of W---s; Col. St L---R; Mr S--n, & Many Other Well Known Characters. Buying into the intense public desire to know more about the now well-established celebrity, the Memoirs are filled with improbable accounts of Robinson's sexual adventures and prowess. Depicted as the 'English courtesan', Robinson excels even the most infamous mistresses of antiquity: 'not all the courtezans of ancient days, however initiated in the postures of Aretin, and the precepts of Ovid, could possibly excel her'.<sup>18</sup> With a 'universal' following of devoted admirers, 'no female has reigned with more absolute sway over the amorous heart than the Perdita. At times, every rank and profession has felt her silken chains, and gladly embraced her pleasing bondage' (p.27; p.3).

Robinson's 'reign' over the public, however, appears more focused and ingenious, more carefully constructed than a simple, natural reliance upon her acknowledged sexual charms. Despite its intrusive, ridiculous and borderline pornographic elements, these Memoirs are surprisingly perceptive about the 'puffing' process of the late eighteenth century. The 'Introduction' to the biography instantly draws the reader's attention to its 'sources':

The Memoirs of the fair one who fills the following sheets, has never been given to the public but by piece-meal, and in detached morsels; while the following history may with propriety be said to be dictated *by herself*: many of the more private transactions were indisputably furnished by her; nor could they possibly originate from any other source. [. . .] [T]he circumstances of her life were communicated by *one* who has for several years been her confidant, and to whose pen she has been indebted for much news-paper panegyric.

Sewing together snippets of gossip, the author/editor of the Memoirs hints at the possibility that the story has never been told in full, for strategic reasons, deliberately released slowly and tantalizingly for the consumption of a public hungry for celebrity gossip. The sense of Robinsonian complicity is overwhelming and the suggestion that her confidants direct the press and that she supervises them in turn, points to a woman tightly in control of the mechanics of her public image: a woman who 'sparked' 'daily puff-paragraphs [. . .] in almost every paper' (p.47). Even when faced with rival celebrities, who try to monopolize printed coverage and topple Robinson from her exalted pedestal, she still remains firmly in charge of public opinion: 'The sisterhood employed all their arts, the news-papers teemed with *well-paid for* abuse (sometimes in cash, and when they run [*sic.*] low, with personal favours) but Perdita was still *triumphant*' (p.63).



Every aspect of Robinson's career appears in the Memoirs to be organized and promoted by the only too corruptible press, anticipating and directing events before they occur. Even lovers are secured before proper meetings:

Every engine was now set to work to fix the august youth [the Prince of Wales]: the news-papers teemed with congratulations on her conquest her *new* apartments were announced --- her *new* carriage was *bespoke* --- her jewels chosen --- her plate --- and that most wished for object, the *settlement* was stipulated --- long before Florizel had condescended to favour her with the *simple osculation*, or kiss complimentary (p.89).

Unsurprisingly, claim the Memoirs, after a meteoric rise to fame, Robinson had earned the 'epithet of the *Comet*' by 1783, her 'character and celebrity [. . .] subjects of universal speculation' (p.167). Public appearances of the new star are advertised well in advance 'by some *friendly hand*' to ensure maximum audiences (p.180). Indeed, the Memoirs address a reader familiar with Robinson's physical appearance, so lovingly dwelt over by the press and her visibility appears to be taken for granted: 'You who doubtless have seen her person' (p.28). Conspicuous consumption and promotion of luxury goods, the 'elegant meretricious embellishments' and trappings of the celebrity lifestyle add to Robinson's presence and recognizability, creating demand in the marketplace and attaching material objects inextricably to the fame of the Robinson name (p.180).

### iii. The 'Priestess of Taste'<sup>19</sup>

Articles, sketches, skits about and caricatures of Mary Robinson consistently stressed one thing: Robinson's seemingly endless desire for money and the material luxuries a wealthy

lifestyle entailed. In May 1780, the Town and Country Magazine's Tête-à-Tête of Sir John Lade and Robinson treated the young actress surprisingly kindly, but started a trend for emphasizing her weakness for opulent possessions. An actress almost from the cradle, Robinson's thirst for fame and fortune began, according to the 'Memoirs' at a very early age: 'she thought it expedient to pursue some plan of life to support herself in a genteel manner. The stage had from her infancy been not only her favourite amusement, but she even languished to make her personal appearance on it'.<sup>20</sup> The article continues with numerous instances of aristocratic, libertine temptations to buy Robinson's favours, from an 'offer [of] £100' from 'Lord B---', 'for the pleasure of spending a few hours with her', to the rather vague 'orders' given by 'Sir William S---' for 'a new chariot to be built for her'. Astonished by her adamant refusals and her ability to 'forgo the magic power of that metal, which, indeed, often seems to operate like witchcraft', the go-betweens are forced to conclude that 'the Dramatic Enchantress' was 'not so easy a conquest as many imagined'.

Robinson is commended for her watchfulness by the Town and Country when approached by Sir John Lade, the 'Doating Lover', who had already swindled another actress into giving up her profession, luring her into the country and then taking her money. To Lade's promises of a 'settlement', Robinson is imagined replying with a wary smile: "'I hope you do not mean such a settlement as Miss B--- [the abandoned actress] has just had made upon her'". Lade's persistence, however, coupled with a '*carte blanche*' and 'a pair of valuable diamond earrings', finally win over the seduced 'Enchantress', having, at last, succeeded in 'flatter[ing] her vanity' and, most importantly, 'gratified her ambition'. The 'attentions and assiduities' paid by Sir John 'are the surest means of



securing a woman's affection and fidelity', despite no shortage of competition in the 'very great' number of rivals vying for Robinson's notice.<sup>21</sup> Simple offers of monetary reward or insubstantial hints about future gifts are unlikely to succeed with this ambitious actress. Fame, for Robinson, was inextricable from its glamorous and glittering accoutrements.

Revelling in her purchasing power, Robinson's increasingly visible celebrity manifested itself in an ostentatious display of the latest fashionable items. Her expenditure was legendary. In the June 1783 edition of the Rambler's Magazine, where the most famous women of the day were sold to the highest bidder in 'An Auction of Originals from the Cyprian Gallery', the first bid, by Count H---g, of 'five hundred guineas' is dismissed as farcical by the auctioneer C---e: 'Five hundred guineas, Count! Why it wouldn't pay her shoemaker's annual bill' (RM, I [June 1783], 210). The daily press dwelt so minutely upon every new dress, carriage, and luxury item bought by Robinson that a 'Lover of Virtue' felt compelled to write to one of the worst culprits, the Morning Herald, complaining about the amount of coverage afforded to one whom he considered one of the most 'fashionable prostitutes': 'In what degree of low scandal is a certain morning paper now held! Whole columns of it filled with Mrs Robinson's green carriage!'.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, as the 'Amorous and Bon Ton Intelligence' section of the March 1783 edition of the Rambler's Magazine enthused: 'Mrs Robinson's name is repeated four times in the description of the Opera House; she having subscribed for that number of persons in one box, in order to retain it to herself. In regard to this circumstance, it may be observed, that, tho' she appears four times over, we cannot have *too much of a pretty woman*' (RM, I [March 1783], 118). Robinson's public visibility was not confined to

print: she was literally everywhere, imbued even in the metropolitan architecture. The quadruple reminder of her name at the opera would have ensured that however many of the 'noble crew' entered the famous '*be-mirrored*' box, only Mary Robinson was reflected in the permanent records of the house.

Robinson's glamorous appearance initiated a new trend in fashion reporting in English periodicals: her dresses were reproduced with the loving care of a *couturier*. Every masquerade, party at the Pantheon, Ranelagh, Vauxhall, or public occasion saw lengthy descriptions of Robinson's clothes, often to the exclusion of everyone else, who were dismissed with a curt sentence or two. Robinson's costumes were often deliberately provocative or different, which, of course, had the effect of drawing even greater attention towards her appearance, ensuring that, before long, she 'was now known, by name, at every public place in and near the metropolis' (Robinson: Memoirs, p.64). A grand society masquerade at the Pantheon is reported in the 'Masquerade Intelligence' of the March 1783 edition of the Rambler's Magazine, where Robinson's difference from the other women attracts comment: 'The *Perdita* appeared in a quaker-coloured domino, and was without a hat, to display a finished head-dress' (RM, I [March 1783], 118). Deliberately dressing in a subdued manner and rejecting a hat, Robinson reveals a 'head-dress' sure to provoke interest. As a contemporary and neighbour, Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, would remember with scarcely disguised jealousy in her Memoirs of 1824, Robinson had the ability to dress strikingly, whatever the occasion:

Today she was a *paysanne*, with her straw hat tied at the back of her head, looking as if too new at what she passed, to know what she looked at. Yesterday she, perhaps, had been the dressed *belle* of Hyde-Park, trimmed, powdered, patched, painted to the utmost power of rouge and white lead; to morrow,



she would be the cravatted Amazon of the riding house: but be what she might, the hats of the fashionable promenaders swept the ground as she passed.<sup>23</sup>

Exploiting and experimenting with all the varieties of contemporary fashion, as Hawkins's reminiscences illustrate, audience reaction is all-important in the construction of a celebrated image.

Where Mary Robinson led, therefore, others followed 'with flattering avidity', however reluctantly (Robinson: Memoirs, p.98). Her high public visibility, coupled with the exactness of detail reported in the papers and periodicals, allowed Robinson's fashions to circulate throughout all levels of London society and ensured the possibility of imitation and reproduction by women of all classes. As the anonymous author/editor of the 1784 Memoirs of Perdita realized, Robinson was a gift to the burgeoning fashion industry: 'Perdita was now the envy of every female heart: her chariot, her phaeton, her dress, her everything, was equally the subject of censure and imitation; and every gown set the giddy circle in an uproar'.<sup>24</sup> One dress especially caused a stir, for its sheer daring, in more ways than one. Despite arguments to the contrary put forward by Aileen Ribeiro and Amanda Foreman, it was Robinson and not Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who first imported the '*chemise de la reine*', an exact copy of one worn by Marie Antoinette, from France, scandalizing and seducing society in equal measures. On 30 October 1782, three years before Foreman records Georgiana's first appearance wearing the dress, the Morning Herald waited with anticipation for the revelation of the season: 'The Perdita has received a dress from Paris, which was introduced this autumn by the Queen of France, and has caused no small anxiety in the fashionable circles. [. . .] It is totally calculated for the Opera, where it is expected to make its first appearance'.

Unsurprisingly, this is exactly where the dress appeared. Articles abounded in the papers about this revealing '*undress*', soon 'adopt[ed]' by 'Ladies of the first style',<sup>25</sup> whatever their figure, prompting the Morning Chronicle on 28 November to lament its 'unbecoming' fit on women who were not distinguished by 'nature' with a 'slim and elegant form'.<sup>26</sup>

While the dress was physically 'unbecoming', it also raised questions about the propriety of an actress from the trading class dressing in the manner of a queen and subsequently directing the fashion for the aristocracy. In the 'Metropolitan Essays' for the Monthly Magazine of 1800 Robinson revelled in this incendiary sartorial success:

The females of England are considerably indebted to our most celebrated actresses for the revolution in dress. Accustomed in late years to behold the *costume* of various nations gracefully displayed at our theatres, women of rank, who lead the capricious idol FASHION, through all the mazes of polite society, speedily adopted what they considered as advantageous to beauty (X [November], 305).

The Rambler's Magazine of January 1783 tried to reverse the trend by declaring that the titled scorned wearing the dress outside the boudoir: 'The *chemise de la Reine* is not at all worn by women of fashion in public; in the dressing room they sometimes appear, and, for a dressing-robe are really convenient. Lady B--- made one of silver muslin to see her friends after her lying-in, but never appeared in it out of her own home' (RM, I [January 1783], 38). Ironically, however, this 'Intelligence' reveals quite how far the fashionable Robinson had penetrated upper-class society. In her 'Sylphid Essays', articles on contemporary mores for the Morning Post, published between 1799 and 1800, Robinson commented acerbically, but ambiguously, on the uncertain social position of such a 'woman of the *Demi-ton*' as herself:



The circles of nobility, the abodes of the enlightened, are closed against such a companion; she has therefore only to mix with men of rank by becoming the dependant, and the flatterer of degraded beauty. [. . .] On her chimney are files of visiting-cards, with the names of persons to whom she is totally unknown, picked up in the morning perambulations, or ingeniously written by herself, to give her a kind of domestic consequence.<sup>27</sup>

Yet not only had the dress introduced by and credited to Robinson entered a private female sphere where her presence, as a '*demi-rep*' and actress, would have been strictly forbidden, but 'Lady B---' would still have helped to publicize the garment and provoked discussion by wearing it while receiving her aristocratic friends.

Robinson's adoption and re-introduction of a royal garment and its subsequent and pervasive impact on the class supposed to direct the fashions contributed to the 'revolution in dress' so proudly discussed in the 'Metropolitan Essays' and further mocked contemporary philosophical notions of aristocratic influence. In the The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), Adam Smith stated that:

It is from our disposition to admire, and consequently to imitate, the rich and the great, that they are enabled to set, or to lead what is called the fashion. Their dress is the fashionable dress; the language of their conversation, the fashionable style; their air and deportment, the fashionable behaviour. Even their vices and follies are fashionable; and the greater part of men are proud to imitate and resemble them in the very qualities which dishonour and degrade them.<sup>28</sup>

According to Smith, rank entailed imitation, no matter how economically detrimental to the lower-class impersonator. Surface image is all for the aspiring would-be aristocrat: 'The dress of an agreeable man of high rank recommends itself, and how peculiar and fantastical soever, comes soon to be admired and imitated'.<sup>29</sup> For Smith, however, aristocratic attributes are fixed firmly in the imagination, the lack of fit only too telling:

That is not the fashion which every body wears, but which those wear who are of high rank, or character. The graceful, the easy, and commanding manners of the great, joined to the usual richness and magnificence of their dress, give a grace to the very form which they happen to bestow upon it. As long as they continue to use this form, it is connected in our imaginations with the idea of something that is genteel and magnificent too. As soon as they drop it, it loses all the grace, which it had appeared to possess before, and being now used only by the inferior ranks of people, seems to have something of their meanness and awkwardness.<sup>30</sup>

By contrast, Robinson, although wearing the clothes of her supposed social 'betters', appeared to greater advantage in her dresses than the over-nourished aristocrats, who reversed Smith's theory and copied trader's daughter Robinson. Ironically, Robinson was rarely discussed without references to her impressive *mien*, only too at home with her assumed social identity. As the Rambler's Magazine of June 1783 enthused: 'the graces always accompany her' (RM, I [June 1783], 218). 'Lady B---' and her titled sisters perhaps dared not to leave their houses, unable to carry off the figure-hugging *chemise de la Reine* that appeared to such graceful, fitting advantage on Mary Robinson.

Movement and carriage of another kind also rivalled the aristocratic monopoly on conspicuous consumer spending in the late eighteenth century. An entire satire, The Vis-a-Vis of Berkeley Square, detailed Mary Robinson's penchant for out-charioteering the upper classes:

This comet upon wheels!  
Which, burnish'd as it runs, doth blaze,  
Of all, the wonder and the gaze!  
Commision's like the Seals!

Robinson's 'bright Chariot of the day', running on 'brimstone wheels', simply drives all 'Competitors away!'.<sup>31</sup> The Rambler's of May 1783 parodied the public obsession with



Robinson's latest mode of innovative transport, the single most expensive luxury possessions in the late eighteenth century:

The Perdita's new carriage, the first appearance of which has been announced with so much gravity and decency, is certainly one of the most superb machines ever contrived, since the triumphal car in which Alexander made his entry into Babylon. It is to appear on Sunday se'nnight and the order of the procession will be as follows: six ladies from King's Place, two and two, in white, strewing flowers on the ground, six coaches of *members* of the house of Lords, and twelve of the house of Commons. A deputation from the Cabinet --- Dally, Sally, the Bird and the Wren, in an open landau, singing --- *See the conquering hero comes*. Next the Perdita herself, in her new carriage, attended by Paw-waw, We-wo, Wig-wum, and a black postilion. The rear will be brought up by the principal clergy, gentlemen of the law, &c and her two *principal puffers*. In this manner will the divine and virtuous women enter Hyde-Park, and in the evening, there will be bonfires and illuminations (RM, I [May 1783], 200).

Although a satirical account, the article suggests the remarkable, quasi-regal attraction Mary Robinson exerted over her diverse audience. Note the positioning of her agents of publicity, directing the procession at a discrete distance. The Rambler's was not averse itself, however, to devoting disproportionate and admiring column inches to Robinson's latest costly coach. December 1782 witnessed Robinson's introduction of a 'carmelite and silver' carriage, followed by a sensuous account of the interior in January 1783, in which the writer can barely disguise the allure of this new luxury: 'Mrs Robinson's livery is green faced with yellow, and richly trimmed with broad silver lace; the harness ornamented with stars of silver, richly chased and elegantly finished. The inside of the carriage is lined with white silk, embellished with scarlet trimmings' (RM, I [January 1783], 38).

The interiors of Robinson's carriages were so meticulously detailed and dwelt upon because the press assumed that, like the bejewelled opera boxes, they were the scenes of some of the most infamous seductions of the day. Many of the satirical skits and cartoons of Robinson published in the 1780s featured her 'taking the reins' of her own recognizable 'fame machines'. Carriage riding was criticised by eighteenth-century conduct-book writers for encouraging female enervation. In the 'Amusements' section of the 1774 A Father's Legacy to His Daughters, Dr John Gregory, while recommending 'walking and riding on horseback' as activities to 'give vigour to your constitutions, and a bloom to your complexions', warned against the detrimental effects of the carriage: 'They are like most articles of luxury, useful and agreeable when judiciously used; but when made habitual, they become both insipid and pernicious'.<sup>32</sup> Robinson's love of 'charioteering' through the streets of London broke every rule of feminine propriety in the book (RM, I [January 1783], 38). In the August 1783 edition of the Rambler's Magazine, 'A Conversation Upon Driving', which is accompanied with an image of 'The New Vis-a-Vis', Robinson is pictured surrounded by her male admirers who indulge in a volley of puns about her propensity to take 'hold of the *reins* herself' (figure V). Robinson's invitation to the men 'to *come* in', for she 'ha[s] plenty of room for [them] all' is taken up by 'Reynard' (Charles James Fox), who, 'safely stowed in the vis-a-vis', is left 'to enjoy a delicious tete-a-tete with the enchanting Perdita' (RM, I [August 1783], 304). Another cartoon depicted Robinson driving a remarkably passive, hatless Fox through the streets of London as 'Perdito and Perdita - or - Man and Woman of the People' (figure VI). Although imbued with sexual innuendo, the image also hints at Robinson's ability not







only to control the mechanisms of publicity, but also to drive and direct the 'People'. ultimately, the most important audience for the eighteenth-century celebrity.<sup>33</sup>

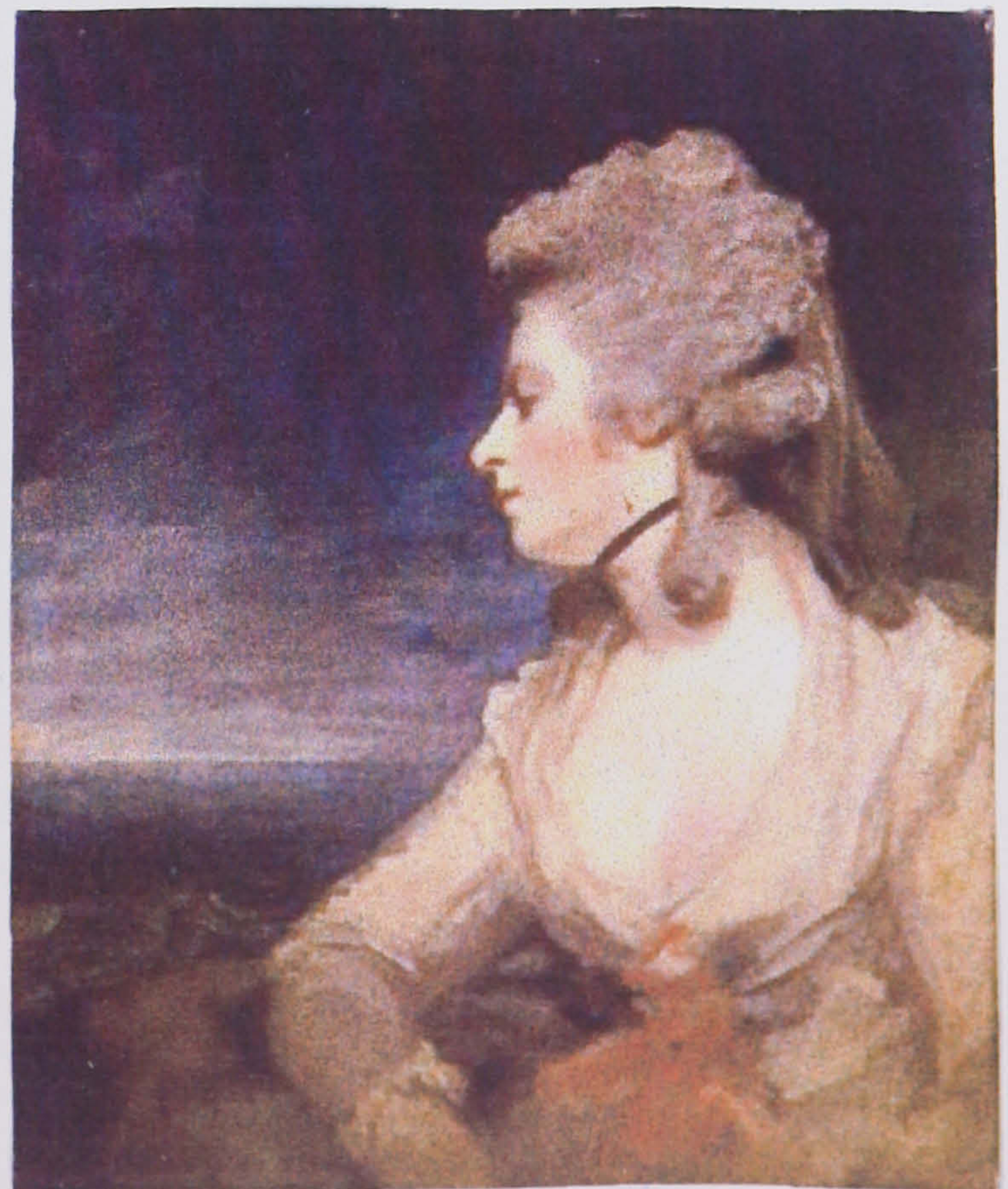
The image of Robinson in 'Perdito and Perdita' was a direct copy of a 1782 portrait by the most famous and fashionable contemporary artist of the period, Sir Joshua Reynolds. A miniature by John Hazlitt (the brother of William Hazlitt) also employed the same picture.<sup>34</sup> The dissemination of Robinson's likeness illustrating the fluidity of movement between 'high' and 'low' art in the later eighteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Robinson fully exploited the opportunities offered by the craze for portraiture, at its height in the 1780s, to circulate her famous face among the celebrated of the day.<sup>36</sup> On 19 April 1782, the Public Advertiser noted the proliferation of Robinson portraits with wonder: 'The *Perdita* has been particularly successful in the commerce of this Year. How immense must have been her *Imports* and *Exports* is cognisable from this one Circumstance: she has sate for her Picture four times, viz. twice to *Romney*, once to *Gainsborough*, and once to *Sir Joshua Reynolds*!'.<sup>37</sup> Robinson emerges from this account as a consumer *extraordinaire*: her contribution to the commercial world signalled by the economic phraseology employed to discuss the lucrative productivity of her image. The full-length Gainsborough portrait of 1781 presents Robinson holding and exposing a miniature, presumed to be of the Prince of Wales (figure VII). In her Memoirs, Robinson again drew attention to this gift from the Prince, which she kept long after their affair had ended, wearing it 'on her bosom' in public, provoking 'peculiar attention' (Robinson: Memoirs, p.123). Manipulating audience perception through artistic representations, Robinson ensured that her position as first and most famous mistress of the Prince of Wales would always be apparent in print and paint.





Figure VII (above) Thomas Gainsborough,  
Mrs Mary Robinson (1781). Oil on canvas,  
233.7 cm by 153 cm.

Figure VIII (right) Sir Joshua Reynolds,  
Mrs Robinson (1784). Oil on canvas,  
76 cm by 63 cm.





Perhaps the most intriguing portrait of Robinson is the Reynolds image of 1784, often referred to as Contemplation, in which Robinson appears to glance out to a stormy seascape from the safety of a rock, shunning the viewer's gaze (figure VIII).<sup>38</sup> Close examination of the portrait, which was painted after Robinson had succumbed to the illness that would eventually cripple her, reveals that Robinson is not, in fact, surveying the scene before her and contemplating future prospects, but glancing down, seemingly ignoring the dramatic storms on the horizon.<sup>39</sup> If this portrait is set in its historical context, Robinson's disregard of both viewer and landscape can be read quite differently. Entranced, not by the fantastic backdrop, but by her self, Robinson presents an image of a woman confident in her status as a celebrity.<sup>40</sup> When Reynolds died in 1792, Robinson rushed into print with A Monody to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which castigated those who had failed to mourn sufficiently for an artist who

drew each model for a rising age!  
Say, is no kind, no grateful tribute due  
To HIM, who twin'd immortal wreaths for ~~you?~~<sup>41</sup>

Robinson laments her solitary weeping, 'I weep, unseen, in some lonely ivy'd bower', seemingly the only one fully acknowledging Reynolds's ability to immortalize his subjects, 'bid[ding] ambition's brightest incense burn!'.<sup>42</sup> Ironically, the Monody does not close with further panegyrics upon Reynolds, but with a fervent prayer that those who 'puff' his name, as he forwarded them through his flattering reproductions, will be rewarded with renown based eternally upon one's contemporary celebrity :

Oh, YE! who owe to each the meed of praise,  
Who shar'd the converse of his blameless days;  
Who, living, own'd the virtues of his heart,  
Who mark'd the rising glories of his art;  
STILL GUARD HIS FAME! and when, to happier skies,



Like him ye mourn, each sainted spirit flies!  
 May the fond MUSE, to WORTH and GENIUS true,  
 WITH EQUAL JUSTICE FORM A WREATH FOR YOU!<sup>43</sup>

It is thus telling that Robinson reused Reynolds's picture more than any other to illustrate and preface her literary texts, revealing not a woman who wished to disengage her literary persona from her celebrated past, but one whose shrewd manipulation of eighteenth-century publicity allowed her actively to exploit her secure knowledge of her public's regard and her own confidence in her contemporary fame to sell her texts.<sup>44</sup>

### iii. 'Then smile, and know thyself supremely great'<sup>45</sup>

This is not the version of the Mary Robinson phenomenon most favoured by contemporary critics. A curiously threatening and substantial shadow still haunts current critical analyses of Robinson's later literary career. Refusing to be suppressed, it is loud, gaudy, and only too eager to bawl its name in the ears of terrified scholars. Its name? Robinson's past. How can it be possible to take a multi-talented writer seriously when she is dogged by a scandalous past? In The 'Scandalous Memoirists' Lynda M. Thompson has argued that Robinson felt unable to engage with her past in her writings, preferring to sever links with her famous name through disguise and disclaimer. Similarly, in a paper devoted to 'Mary Robinson's Sylphid Self', Sharon Setzer suggests that Robinson achieved agency in her writing only by divorcing herself from her publicity-scarred body.<sup>46</sup> Thompson and Setzer follow the argument of critics like Catherine Gallagher, who, in the light of poststructuralist theory have examined how 'an inability to own the

text [. . .] is linked to the author's gender'.<sup>47</sup> In Nobody's Story Gallagher suggests that, for the eighteenth-century woman writer, authorial disembodiment and dispossession were and are causes for celebration rather than disappointment. To celebrate Robinson's absence from her writings, however, would be to dehistoricize and decontextualize the voracious appetite of the literary marketplace for revelations of the famous, a commercial climate of which Robinson was acutely aware. As she claimed passionately in her 'Metropolitan Essays' for the Monthly Magazine, the author and the text were inextricably bound: 'The Author breathes in his works - lives in their spirit' (X [October 1800], 220).

An analysis of The False Friend in the Analytical Review most succinctly illustrated Robinson's tendency for self-publicity, commenting on her intrusive, but ultimately seductive, presence in her fiction:

The style is diffuse, the work too long, the perplexities wearisome, even to oppression --- the whole, perhaps, too desultory, loose and inartificial, reducible to no rules. Yet let not the fair writer be pained by the seeming severity of our remarks: amidst these disadvantages, we have felt, and we acknowledge her powers; losing sight of the story, we perceive only the author.<sup>48</sup>

Robinson, it seems, was still able to exert her enchanting influence over the press. Her first novel, Vancenza; or the Dangers of Credulity, published in 1792, nearly a decade after Robinson's most famous exploits daily filled the newspapers and periodicals, was a massively hyped publicity event. Selling out on the first day of publication, Vancenza achieved five more editions within the decade. The expectation of salacious revelations about Robinson's most celebrated *amours* boosted sales. As Maria Elizabeth Robinson would later acknowledge in the Continuation of her mother's Memoirs: 'It must be



confessed, this production owed its popularity to the celebrity of the author's name' (Robinson: Memoirs, p.137). Excited reviews of the text drew attention to the first fictional production of, as the Analytical Review put it, 'a female who has not been an idle spectator of life'.<sup>49</sup> The European Magazine searched avidly for scandal, claiming that 'from many circumstances, we are led to believe that it is not altogether fiction' and perceiving, in the character of the Duke del Vero, 'a stroke aimed at a higher rank, nearer home than Spain'.<sup>50</sup> The Critical, however, refused to be star-struck by Robinson, expressing its policy of not pandering to the sensibilities of the famous and criticizing the text: 'whatever may be the splendour of a name, we have never scrupled offering our opinion'.<sup>51</sup> Nor did the desire for revelation alter as Robinson's final novels were published in 1799. The Monthly Magazine and British Register, reviewing The False Friend, perceived 'a domestic tale in which the author tells the tale of her own woes', while the European Magazine again sensed personal disclosure in Robinson's final fiction, The Natural Daughter, feeling compelled to enlighten 'the curious that memoirs of [Mary Robinson], in some trying situations, are introduced into these Volumes, under the fictitious character of Mrs Sedgely'.<sup>52</sup>

Acutely alert to consumer demand, Robinson exploited her sexual celebrity to sell her texts, thus keeping her name firmly in the public eye. The Preface to Vancenza revealed Robinson's confidence in her exalted status by refusing to bow to conventions and to reviewers or possible patrons, instead addressing the text to her still adoring throng of followers: 'The Public'.<sup>53</sup> Shrewdly flattering those whose interest had aided her both to fame and now to literary status, Robinson astutely manipulated her potential audience. Ironically, as the acerbic Critical was forced to remark, despite its unfavourable review

of Vancenza: 'The public will ultimately decide, and to their supreme tribunal we leave the decision, scarcely apprehending that the judgment will be reversed'.<sup>54</sup> In The Natural Daughter, through the voice of Mr Index, a fictional publisher, Robinson cleverly dismantles the mechanisms of literary celebrity, suggesting ways to manipulate public opinion:

if your fertile pen can make a story out of some recent popular event, such as an highly-fashioned elopement, a deserted, distracted husband, or abandoned wife, an ungrateful runaway daughter, or a son ruined by sharpers; with such a title as 'Noble Daring; or The Distracted Lovers'; '*Chacun à son Tour*'; or, The Modern Husband'; 'Passion in Leading-Strings; or Love's Captive'; 'Modern Wives and Antique Spouses'; 'Old Dowagers and Schoolboy Lovers', or any thing from real life of equal celebrity or notoriety, your fortune is made; your works will sell, and you will either be admired or feared by the whole phalanx of fashionable readers; particularly if you have the good luck to be menaced with a prosecution.<sup>55</sup>

As Mr Index claims, a provocative title will attract the whole gamut of readers, from 'every order of the high world' to 'every species of the low' (ND, II, p.38). Lower class readers will be seduced by the promise of the revelation of aristocratic boudoir secrets, while the titled will, in similar fashion to Lady Amaranth in Walsingham, search, in this new eighteenth-century concept which developed simultaneously with the cult of celebrity, (later to be titled a *roman à clef*), for their own names, in the hope of securing their own renowned status. When informed about the novel Family Secrets, Lady Amaranth is instantly ecstatic:

O Heaven! Whose? --- Anybody's that I know? Delightful! --- Charming! --- give me the first volume, --- I will not sleep till I have read it. Are any of my friends in it? --- Full of anecdote I dare say. --- What a clever creature! --- I hope he does not mention me. --- I never heard so exquisite a title. --- You must present him to me.<sup>56</sup>



Unsurprisingly, the 'literary treasure' produced by the heroine of The Natural Daughter, which capitalizes upon her chequered past and delineates characters 'from life', is consequently snapped up by Index, reaching 'six editions' in as many months (ND, II, p.36; p.129).

Already Robinson's 'characters' begin to explode the central theses of Gallagher *et al.* As an author whom Gallagher would distinguish as a 'novelist' rather than a writer of personal satire or allegory, Robinson thus tells somebody's story instead of nobody's, while still presenting her texts as 'admitted fictions'.<sup>57</sup> Most radical, however, is Robinson's refusal to bow to the conventions of textual secrecy and allow the gaps in the text to remain tantalizingly open, in stark contrast to the prevalent contemporary textual device of allowing names of important or real characters to remain blank. Gallagher again: '\_\_\_\_\_ is a sign of nonfictional writing, the mark of scandal, the tear in the text that indicates an outside where a referent too important to be named waits to be discovered'.<sup>58</sup> In The Natural Daughter, Robinson's equally scandalous celebrity patroness, Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire makes several guest appearances in the text as the heroine, Martha Morley's, own supporter. Emphatically named 'as herself', Georgiana appears with illegitimate child and dubious past intact: the heroine's supposed bastard child seeming 'not wholly enigmatical to the duchess of Chatsworth' (ND, II, pp.168-69). Equally generically daring is the introduction of a novelist as a character in the same text.<sup>59</sup> Martha Morley, who, like Robinson herself, was '[e]ncouraged by popular approbation' to publish her novels, actively desires to become an author, not only to gain financial independence but also for the 'attainment of fame' (Robinson: Memoirs,

p.137): '[Mrs Morley] was [e]lated with the hope of attaining at least a sprig of that prolific laurel which in these reading days spreads its wide and pliant branches over every species of literature' (ND, II, p.33; p.35). Even when disheartened by lack of immediate success and adoptions of other methods of employment as diverse as schoolmistress and courtesan, Martha returns to literature as a profession, refusing to be an authorial nobody: "'I find that she wishes rather to admonish than to be sanctioned. I could have pitied her obscurity, but I can't pardon her presumption'", states a possible patron (ND, II, p.112).

Martha's literary presence is further asserted in front of the same audience when Robinson introduces a playful, self-referential allusion to her own poetic pseudonyms intermingled with those of others influenced by the Della Cruscan poetry circle of the 1780s<sup>60</sup>:

'I suppose she is one of the Julias or Sapphos of the present day.  
[. . .] Pray ma'am, do you write in the newspapers? [. . .] Are you  
Anna Matilda, or Della Crusca, or Laura Maria? Comical creatures!  
they have made me shed many a tear, though I never more than half  
understood them'.

Martha rejects all out of hand, positively reasserting her own authorial identity: "'I never wrote under either of those signatures", said Mrs Morley' (ND, II, p.108). Robinson's self-reflexivity also ensures her own place in the text, existing in triplicate as Julia, Sappho and Laura Maria, names that may have been pseudonymous, but were far from anonymous. As Maria Elizabeth Robinson claimed in the Memoirs, her mother's proliferating disguises were only too transparent, encoded intimately within the Robinson name: 'the encomiums which were passed on her poems, could not fail to gratify the pride of the writer, who sent her next performance, with her own signature, [. . .] avowing



herself at the same time the author of the lines signed "Laura" and "Laura Maria" (Robinson: Memoirs, p.137). Robinson always drew attention to her 'nameless' productions. A letter to a fellow contributor of the Morning Post, Samuel Jackson Pratt, in August 1800, illustrates Robinson's reclamation of one name only: 'I continue my daily labours in the Post; all the Oberons. Tabithas. M Rs and indeed most of the Poetry, you see there is mine'.<sup>61</sup> It is telling that the pseudonyms Robinson employed were themselves loaded with connotations of celebrity, pointing to her confident ability to assimilate the identities of some of the most popular and famous writers and their creations of the eighteenth century and earlier, while still holding on, firmly, to Mary Robinson.<sup>62</sup>

Instead of evading her scandalous name, Robinson capitalizes upon her reputation to keep the author firmly embedded within the text, simultaneously fictionalizing and maintaining a famous persona still recognized and desired by the public. She further adopted fame as a strategic political device to promote the struggling eighteenth-century writer. In a series of essays published in the Morning Post between 1799 and 1800, where Robinson took on the mantle of the 'Sylphid', her concern with celebrity is apparent in many of the articles. Papers III and X especially detail Robinson's faith in the efficacy of fame to fight injustice and promote the most worthy but currently unrecognized literary genius. Robinson opens the latter with a typically self-obsessed puff:

Fame! who sounds her trumpet to the immortality of Genius,  
Virtue, Valour, and Patriotism! taking from the Scythe of Time  
its desolating power, and raising a pillar dedicated to Truth, which  
shall never perish --- Yes, Mr Editor FAME has crowned your  
Sylphid with a wreath more desirable than either wealth or power;

more gratifying, more enviable, than all the glittering splendours of  
a diadem!

So honoured, so distinguished, I will pursue my flight.<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, claims Robinson, transient riches and status cannot achieve lasting fame: 'TIME will record your names and consecrate your labours! Your works will give lustre to his wings, while they level with the dust, the lofty monuments of *wealth* and *ostentation*' (SE, III, p.19). Embodying a feminized figure of 'Fame', Robinson, overcoming 'tears of pity and indignation', states categorically, that she will 'guard the memory of the *Man of Mind*, when the *Man of Wealth* and title is forgotten' (SE, X, p.57). While it may appear as if Robinson defends the traditional notion of fame as a posthumous reward for literary excellence, the context for the essays, diurnal newspaper articles written by a journalist who supports the expansion of print culture, suggests that the contemporary neglect of the artist, for whom fame should be a 'birthright', is Robinson's concern here, as in her 'Metropolitan Essays' for the Monthly Magazine (X [October 1800], 220).

It is the 'Woman of Mind', however, that Robinson is most concerned with in her sonnet sequence Sappho and Phaon (1796). Emphasizing her own exalted status as the 'British Sappho' Robinson offers a female slant on the Sapphic legend, a position intended to illuminate the talented career of this most famous of women writers, in tandem with her more frequently detailed passionate affairs: 'OVID and POPE have celebrated the passion of Sappho for Phaon; but their portraits, however beautifully finished, are replete with shades, tending rather to depreciate than to adorn the Grecian Poetess'.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to her illustrious predecessors Robinson intends to place Sappho firmly in the limelight. Replacing the laurels dislodged by male poets enables Robinson



to make a connection between the obscure and probably lowly background of Sappho and the similarly impressive self-exertions, against the odds, of Robinson's female contemporaries. Prominent within a wealth of prefatory material are puffs for the Rousseauvian heroics of British women writers: 'I cannot conclude these opinions without paying tribute to my illustrious countrywomen, who, unpatronized by courts, and unprotected by the powerful, persevere in the paths of literature, and ennoble themselves by the unperishable lustre of MENTAL PRE-EMINENCE!' ('Preface', p.149). Through difficult but essentially rewarding self-exertion, women can earn the highest accolades in the republic of fame, where one 'deriv[es] but little consequence from birth or connections' ('Account of Sappho', p.151).

In Sappho and Phaon itself Robinson examines the effect passion for the faithless Phaon has upon Sappho's creativity and sense of her own famous persona. According to Sappho, desire has stunted her poetic growth and, uninspired, her tools of the trade lie abandoned: 'Mute, on the ground my Lyre neglected lies, / The Muse forgot and lost the melting lay' (IV). Entranced by nothing but Phaon, Sappho laments the love which causes the neglect of even her most treasured possession, her celebrated name: 'E'en Fame, that cherishes the Poet's lays, / That Fame, ill-fated Sappho lov'd so well' (V). Although it still seeks her out, Sappho feels she cannot embrace the 'smiles of Fame' and 'shuns' the 'brilliancy of renown' (XXI). Yet the protection and dissemination of her name remains a concern throughout the sequence. Sappho's hopeless passion is only too eloquent; her lyrical emotions displayed, paradoxically, over forty-four separate sonnets. Her fear is perpetually for her celebrated name, terrified at the imagined sight of 'A blighted laurel', dimmed by 'the mind's dark winter of eternal gloom' (XXV). Sappho's

loyalties are certainly divided in Robinson's version of the legend, torn between the worst possibilities of losing a lover or the sheer horror induced by the prospective loss of renown, between 'fatal fondness' and 'peerless fame' (XLII). Indeed, by the close of the poem, Phaon is seemingly forgotten as Sappho prepares to leap to her death while simultaneously defying her fears about diminishing celebrity. Before her suicide Sappho undergoes a crowning ceremony, preparing herself for life in death:

Prepare your wreaths, Aonian maids divine,  
To strew the tranquil bed where I shall sleep;  
In tears, the myrtle and the laurel steep,  
And let Erato's hand the trophies twine (XXXIX).

Sappho will die as she lived, at the height of renown: famed by her female contemporaries.

The 1799 Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination builds upon the foundation established by Sappho and Phaon, becoming a full-length defence and celebration of the woman writer.<sup>65</sup> While Robinson follows other female biographers by invoking an illustrious historical timeline of celebrated women, her concentration on contemporaries is more intriguing and subversive.<sup>66</sup> Robinson again directs attention to the woman behind the work, suggesting that the female writer should be celebrated personally, beyond her literary output: 'There is no country, at this epocha, on the habitable globe, which can produce so many exalted and illustrious women (I mean mentally) as England. And yet we see many of them living in obscurity; *known only by her writings*'. Proposing 'national honours,[. . .] public marks of popular applause, [. . .] rank, [. . .] title, [. . .] liberal [and] splendid recompense', Robinson bolsters the mechanics of celebrity which promote public visibility.<sup>67</sup> When she claims



later in the text that '[t]he press will be the monuments from which the genius of British women will rise to immortal celebrity [. . .] [and] challenge an equal portion of fame, with the labours of their classical *male* contemporaries', it is difficult not to read the word 'press' ambiguously. Ever the astute manipulator of her own publicity in newspapers and periodicals, Robinson inextricably links literary celebrity with the dual mechanisms of print and press (Letter, p.91).

Emphasizing the powerful presence of the female author in the marketplace, Robinson's polemic closes with a celebratory account of her pre-eminence among the consumers who matter: the public:

There are men who affect, to think lightly of the literary productions of women: and yet no works are so universally read as theirs. The best novels that have been written, since those of Smollet [*sic.*], Richardson and Fielding, have been produced by women: and their pages have not only been embellished with the interesting events of domestic life, portrayed with all the elegance of phraseology, and all the refinement of sentiment, but with forcible and eloquent, political, theological, and philosophical reasoning (Letter, p.95)

Accurately reading market demand, women have not only produced the popular texts of the day, but have also achieved fame in sections of the arts more usually dominated by men. As James Raven has revealed, Robinson's promotion of the named woman writer was statistically accurate at this time: 'A total of 17 per cent of novels in the 1790s were published with named male writers but more than a fifth (21 per cent) gave named female writers'.<sup>68</sup> Rewriting the history of eighteenth-century literature, Robinson reiterates her praise for fellow female authors who refuse anonymity by 'conclud[ing] [her] Letter with a list of names, which, while they silence the tongue of prejudice, will not fail TO EXCITE EMULATION'. The 'List of British Female Literary Characters

Living in the Eighteenth Century', designed to 'direct the attention of [Robinson's] fair and liberal country-women to the natural genius and mental acquirements of their illustrious contemporaries', is six-page Hall of Fame (Letter, p.95). Covering all aspects of the arts, from novel writing to sculpture, travel writing to translation, the 'List' bolsters the Letter's claims. Somewhat unsurprisingly, both text and list contain references to their author. A discussion of Sappho's celebrated name points the reader to 'the account of this poetess, preceding Mrs Robinson's legitimate sonnets', while 'Mrs Robinson' appears in the 'List' as author of 'Poems, Romances, Novels, a Tragedy, Satires, &c, &c, &c' in a shameless exhibition of self-publicity (Letter, p.43). Later, in her 'Metropolitan Essays' for the Monthly Magazine, Robinson would call for solidarity between the members of a regimental-sounding 'phalanx of enlightened women' to effect revolutionary change: 'How powerful might such a phalanx become, were it to act in a union of sentiment, and sympathy of feeling, [. . .] by a participation of public fame' (X, [October 1800], 220). Far from succumbing to self-effacement, Robinson's texts present an author who throws off contemporary literary disguises to find and revitalize her famous self in her work.

### **Coda: The Puff Posthumous**

Robinson's death on Boxing Day 1800 was not the end of the story. Among numerous obituaries and panegyrics, which included a thirty-five page effusion of 'Tributary Poems' in the collected Poetical Works (1806), Robinson received the high accolade of





Figure IX Mrs Robinson, from Public Characters 1800-1801 (1801)

appearing in Public Characters, 1800-1801.<sup>69</sup> Composed while she was still alive, but only published after her death, ensuring she would appear always as a living monument, Robinson's image and history were part of a volume which contained the likes of William Wilberforce, John Thelwall, Dr James Gregory, and numerous members of the aristocracy (figure IX). The aim of this series was to offer pictorial and written representations of 'the distinguished personages who now fill up the drama of public life in the British Empire'.<sup>70</sup> This particular volume was considered by its editors to be especially important, containing 'lives [. . .] of more importance' than previous collections and encouraging the formation of 'literary statues to *living* genius and virtue'.<sup>71</sup> Robinson's review is particularly complimentary, covering ten pages, and placing her at the zenith of literary fame:

That this is the age of female British authors and that the Lady who will be the subject of the following memoir, is of the number of those who have most eminently distinguished themselves amongst numerous supporters of the female laurel, which is now confessedly one of the indisputable '*Rights of Women*', we trust will be made manifest to all readers, who peruse with candour the various evidences of taste and genius, which we shall point out.<sup>72</sup>

Mary Robinson would have been delighted.



## Chapter IV

### Inflating Frances Burney

On 12 March 1782, the Morning Herald, a paper addicted to puffing Mary Robinson, published an anonymous poem seeking to redirect public attention to more 'worthy' causes of celebration.

#### ADVICE TO THE HERALD

HERALD, wherefore thus proclaim  
 Nought of women but the *shame*?  
 Quit, oh, quit, at least awhile,  
 Perdita's too luscious smile;  
 Wanton Waverley, stilted Dal[l]y,  
 Heroines of each blackguard alley;  
 Better sure record in story  
 Such as shine their sex's glory!  
 Herald! haste, with me proclaim  
 Those of literary fame.  
 Hannah More's pathetic pen,  
 Painting high th' impassion'd scene;  
 Carter's piety and learning,  
 Little Burney's quick discerning;  
 Cowley's neatly-painted wit,  
 Healing those her satires hit;  
 Smiling Streatfield's iv'ry neck,  
 Nose, and notions --- *à la Grecque*!  
 Let Chapone retain a place,  
 And the mother of her Grace,  
 Each art of conversation knowing,  
 High-bred, elegant Boscawen;  
 Thrale, in whose expressive eyes  
 Sits a soul above disguise,  
 Skill'd with wit and sense t'impart  
 Feelings of a generous heart.  
 Lucan, Leveson, Greville, Crewe;  
 Fertile-minded Montague,  
 Who makes each rising art her care,  
 'And brings her knowledge from afar!'

Whilst her tuneful tongue defends  
 Authors dead, and absent friends;  
 Bright in genius, pure in fame:-  
 Herald, haste, and these proclaim!<sup>1</sup>

After four years of intense public attention, 'Little Burney', already the highly fêted author of Evelina and soon to publish Cecilia, one of the most popular and discussed novels of the century, reacted 'quietly enough' to this latest 'honourable' panegyric. Only in 1822, when Frances Burney was arranging her recently dead father's papers, did she discover that these verses were written by Dr Charles Burney himself, who in 1782 had 'carrie[d] them constantly in his pocket', 'read[ing] them to every body!' (19 March 1782, DL, p.132). Attempting to direct the path of his daughter's celebrated name, the noted musicologist appeared to maintain a firm hold upon the Burney publicity machine. Yet the seemingly innocuous 'Little Burney' had ideas of her own about marketing herself to an eager public. In the final decades of the eighteenth century, when she became a literary phenomenon to rival the popularity of the latest scientific discovery, the balloon, Frances Burney possessed enough of her own hot air to keep her career soaring upwards.<sup>2</sup>

### **i. Miss Somebody**

It has become a critical commonplace to describe Frances Burney as the ultimate eighteenth-century 'Miss Nobody', the antithesis of everything represented by Mary Robinson. Like the Robinsons, the Burney family were born of lowly origins, but were constantly clawing their way up the social and cultural ladder to make a name for themselves. A physically small and slight woman, Frances Burney seemed to have been



blown around by every breeze. Unable to stand on her own two feet, perpetually 'tottering', like her distressed heroines, she was always in need of physical and mental support and guidance, especially from her overbearing and oppressive father, and from her mentor, her surrogate 'Daddy', Samuel Crisp, to whom she turned for every decision and whom she obeyed unquestioningly. A dutiful conduct-book ideal, the perfect domestic woman, 'Fannikin' was thus terrified of the idea of becoming an author, petrified by the 'unfeminine' publicity such a role would bring, incapacitated when her cover of anonymity was blown and her name revealed to the world. When she was thrust unwillingly into the limelight after the publication of Evelina in 1778, Burney was timid, shy and self-effacing in public, mortified when anyone drew attention to either her or her literary creations and, keeping firmly to the corner of a room, a shrinking figure who was struck almost dumb when questioned about her success. As critic Joanne Cutting-Gray illustrates, Burney became the 'nobody to whom she writes, a person without substance', whose 'name ha[d] no legitimacy; her statements lacked interpretive force and [thus she] cannot be included in the prevailing discourse for consideration by the country'. Never confident in her public role, this Frances Burney would rather have stayed at home.<sup>3</sup>

This is one version of events, and a version that has held sway over Burney studies since her death in 1840, despite evidence to the contrary in Burney's own writings and the letters and diaries of her friends, family and famous acquaintances. I want to tell a different story; a story that her contemporaries would have recognized. A story, moreover, that locates Burney within the grasping, celebrity-obsessed society of the late eighteenth century, where the amount of media coverage could make or break a career and being seen with the right person could do wonders for one's social standing in the

republic of fame. Burney did not enter this publicity-hungry world naïvely, an ingénue ignorant of the mechanics of celebrity; in this respect, at least, she was her fame-seeking father's daughter. The Frances Burney who emerges from contemporary accounts, including her own, is self-obsessed, secure in her famous image and eager to enhance it at any opportunity, ready to interact with admirers (but only those of whom she approves and whose opinion she values; the others are received monosyllabically or snubbed completely), minutely recording details of others' opinions of her works, the more renowned the better, taking every opportunity to name-drop.<sup>4</sup> This Frances Burney circulates prominently both in public, within a society addicted to discovering and promoting the latest and brightest star, and within a new sphere, the celebrated coterie, salons held by the famous for the famous. Far from the perfect woman extolled by conduct books, representing virtuous negativity, Frances Burney is often only too keen to reveal her status as a recognizable Somebody.<sup>5</sup>

Even before her first public triumphs, Burney's earliest extant diaries point to a teenager convinced of her calling. In an entry for 30th April 1772, she is assured that her undisguised partiality for writers exposes her profession: 'I have a most prodigious enthusiasm for Authors, & wish to see all of all sorts. & I believe they find it out, for they all look at me with benevolence'.<sup>6</sup> It is the very visibility of Burney's secrecy that is striking in this passage, suggesting that her writings were inextricable from her sense of self and not as easily and characteristically suppressed as previously supposed. Aged just seventeen, in 1769, Burney sent her father verses composed on the occasion of his graduation with a doctorate in music from Oxford. Although she fusses over his reception of her poem, she must have been aware of his tendency to puff his family to



whoever would listen, relying on his insatiable desire for celebrity to use him as a vehicle for her own efforts. True to form, Dr Burney returned from Oxford with praises for his daughter for the '*very good stuff*!', an opinion obtained from chance acquaintances met over 'Breakfast' after the degree ceremony. Teasing his daughter with a reading in front of her brother and sister at home, Burney tried half-heartedly to snatch the paper from her father, 'beg[ging]' him '*in vain*' not to reveal her words. Her failure to prevent authorial exposure ensures her immediate flight from the room. '[T]o own the truth', however, Burney confesses that she does not escape entirely, returning to receive the remarks of her audience: 'my curiosity prevail'd so far, that I could not forbear running down stairs again with more speed than up, & into the next room to hear th[e] comments'. Satisfied with her reception, Burney again retreats: 'This was enough --- I ran once more up stairs, & lighter than a Feather felt my Heart' (23 June 1769, EJL I p.81). Note the profoundly corporeal reaction: Burney is entranced by the prospect of publicity. Seduced by the prospect of hearing her writing publicized, albeit within the confines of the family, Burney cannot run fast enough to record the favourable response.

When Frances Burney decided that her writings should be released into the literary world, she did so without any parental influence and with the knowledge and assistance only of her siblings. Despite the critical emphasis on the pitfalls she faced as a woman writer and a disproportionate concentration on her desire for anonymity, it is rarely recognised that Burney actually chose the moment to publish Evelina, a moment that her future publisher Lowndes pinpointed as exactly the right 'time for a Novel' even before he had seen Burney's (25 Dec.1776, EJL II, p.213). After an enormous upsurge in the early 1770s novel production inexplicably declined later in the decade.<sup>7</sup> The drought-stricken

literary market and desperate readers of the novel were thus only too receptive to a new talent. The innocent, naïveté with which Frances Burney supposedly 'entered the world' is not matched in the correspondence she conducted with her chosen publisher Lowndes and her eagerness to 'fe[el] the pulse of the public' (*post* 17 Jan, 1777, EJL II, p.217). Although expressing her desire for her work to remain anonymous, her responses to Lowndes are inquisitive, business-like and most concerned with the profitability of her production. In a letter written after 11 November 1777, Burney expresses her concern with the low value Lowndes has placed upon her novel: 'I must acknowledge that, though it was originally written merely for amusement, I should not have not have taken the pains to Copy and Correct it for the Press, had I imagined that ten guineas a Volume would have been more than its worth' (EJL II, p.288). If an unnamed 'Gentleman' she proposes to consult, who 'is much more experienced in the authorship business' than Burney, should disagree with Lowndes on the book's worth, she will investigate other possibilities, 'giv[ing]' Lowndes 'no further trouble' (EJL II, p.288). The fact that Burney eventually accepted the bookseller's first offer might illustrate either her inexperience or, perhaps more likely, given her immersion in the artistic world through her attendance at Burney household cultural gatherings, her overwhelming desire to publish, whatever the financial rewards. Or as Burney herself later put it in the Memoirs of Dr Burney (1832): 'a wish, as vague, at first, as it was fantastic – crossed the brain of the writer to “see her work in print”'.<sup>8</sup>

Evelina finally made its entrance into the world in January 1778. As was usual with an anonymous publication, reviews were not instantaneous. When they did appear, among others in the Monthly Review in April and the Critical Review in September,



will not stop their being read, though it may prejudice their Readers. They want no Recommendation for that of being handed about but that of being NEW, & they frequently become established, or sink into oblivion, before that high Literary Tribunal has brought them to a trial.<sup>11</sup>

In The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers Frank Donoghue contends that Burney believed wholeheartedly in '[reviewers'] powers that transcend even their own sense of themselves as mediators in the literary marketplace', and that, consequently, 'reviewers seemingly operating independently of readers confer identity upon authors'.<sup>12</sup> Yet Frances Burney's dedication of Evelina to 'The Authors of the Monthly and Critical Reviews', the 'Magistrates of the press, and Censors for the Public' who 'crave' their 'unbiassed' opinion becomes increasingly ironic in the light of these statements of Burney's knowledge of her true 'public'.<sup>13</sup>

## ii. Among the lyons<sup>14</sup>

The revelation of Burney's authorship caused the author less pain than has previously been represented. In Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England Patricia Meyer Spacks encapsulates this critical viewpoint: 'To be marked, discovered, known as a writer, and, perhaps not a proper female, perhaps a woman unforgivably addicted to self-display: this idea focused Fanny Burney's terror of doing wrong'.<sup>15</sup> Far from leading Burney into a life of intense and miserable self-scrutiny, her newly-discovered fame admitted her into a celebrated coterie, a salon culture composed of the famous. That such gatherings, previously socially exclusive, were now run by

writers and musicians and in turn excluded the aristocracy, reveals the continuing ascendancy of artistic renown in the social and cultural firmament. As James Boswell noted, one could enhance one's fame through association: 'I have an enthusiastic love of great men and I derive a sort of glory from it'.<sup>16</sup> Burney would have agreed with Boswell, but would have emphasized the mutual benefits to be obtained from the interaction of contemporary celebrities. Fame brought her into contact with some of the more literary and highly connected of the 'various Multitude', whose opinions of her talent she recorded with obsessive detail. Burney's elevation to famous celebrity, where even the most renowned society artist of the day, Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'would give fifty pounds to know the Author!' proved seductive (EJL III, *post* 15 Sept. 1778, p.139). Dr Burney's advice to his daughter and her response show awareness of the necessity to guard oneself against too many expectations, but also suggest ambitious future prospects, which set both their pulses racing:

[My father] concludes with --- 'I never heard of a Novel Writer's statue, --- yet who knows?, but above all things take care of your Head, if that should be at all turned out of it's [*sic.*] place by all this intoxicating success. What a figure would You cut upon a Pedestal! prenez y bien garde!' ---

Well may he caution me! ---but, as I have told him in answer, if I was to make so ungrateful, so *sinful* a return for the favours of Fortune, as to be ridiculously vain, --- I should think that all this success, charming as it is, bought too much dear! ---(EJL III, 20 July 1778, p.57).

A fortnight later came an even more 'intoxicating' announcement: '*Dr Johnson's* approbation!'. Burney's reaction to this news is even less 'characteristic' of the nervous, publicity-shy novelist:

Good God, it almost *Crazed* me with agreeable surprise!  
--- it gave me such a flight of spirits, that I danced a Jigg to



Mr Crisp, without any preparation, *music*, or explanation, to his no small amazement and diversion. I left him, however, to make his own comments, upon my friskiness, without affording him the smallest assistance (EJL III, 3 August 1778, p.61).

Thrilled by her successful reception by one of the literary giants of the age, 'the acknowledged Head of Literature in this kingdom [. . .] who has the greatest abilities of any Living Author' (August 1778, EJL III, p.73), Burney, the supposedly refined, sedate, nervous young novelist cannot contain her excitement, manifesting it spontaneously in a most 'unladylike' manner. For her outburst, Burney would have been severely in breach of codes of conduct. As Dr Gregory warned: 'I would have you dance with spirit; but never allow yourselves to be so far transported with mirth, as to forget the delicacy of your sex'. Utterly swayed, almost sexually 'transported' by her fame, Burney breaks every rule in the conduct book.<sup>17</sup>

Introduced into the society of Hester Thrale by her father before the publication of her novel, Burney now reappears at Streatham 'as an *Authoress*'. Her fear at this first visit under her new identity is more than compensated by her curiosity to mingle with the great and good of the literary world, of which Burney is aware that she now forms a part. 'I *ever* dreaded it', she claims, 'as it is a Title which must raise more expectations than I have any chance of answering. Yet I am highly flattered by her invitation, & highly delighted at the prospect of being introduced to the Streatham society' (3 Aug. 1778, EJL III, p.63). The implication is, of course, that Burney feels able to hold her own with her fellow writers. As Samuel Crisp reassured her, she was commercially desirable: 'You have nothing to do now, [. . .] but to take your pen in Hand, for your Fame and reputation are made; and any Bookseller will snap at what you write' (3 Aug. 1778, EJL III, p.65).

Now a '*shew*', Burney was a highly sought after presence amongst circles where, before, she had been invisible (3 Aug. 1778, EJL III, p.67). The 'Names of Evelina & Burney', as Crisp realised were now inextricably intertwined in the public imagination. (19 Jan 1779, EJL III, p.238). Thrust into the limelight, Burney claims that she is unsure how to react: 'I would a thousand times rather forfeit my character as a *Writer*, than risk ridicule or censure as a *Female*. I have never set my heart on Fame, & therefore would not if I *could* purchase it at the expense of all my own ideas of propriety' (c.7 Jan. 1779, EJL III, p.212). Often quoted to illustrate the argument that Burney was terrified by her name becoming public property, another reading is also possible. The italicization of the word 'could' emphasizes that Burney knows only too well that she does not have to reject propriety at all in order to sustain the fame she has already achieved for a novel critically and publicly lauded for its 'moral' and 'literary' properties.<sup>19</sup> For Frances Burney, 'fame' and 'reputation' could be maintained simultaneously, existing in a harmonious equilibrium. Critically acclaimed and phenomenally popular with the public, and thus more secure in her authorial position than even she will admit, Burney draws attention to just how much she has 'set [her] heart on fame'.

At Streatham, Burney expresses nothing but approval of the way her new influential friends puff her writing. Hester Thrale's desire to promote her guest's novel introduces Evelina to Elizabeth Montagu, the noted 'Bluestocking': 'O what a Woman is this Mrs Thrale' --- since she *will* make the Book known, --- how sweet a *method* was this, of letting Mrs Montagu know the Honour it has received!' (*post* 15 Sept. 1778, EJL III, p.145). Aware of the mechanics of publicity, Burney too employs her own methods to promote herself in public. Supposedly silent in company, Burney appears rather



coquettish when discussing literature with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 'the most successful & powerful of all dramatic living Authors', who, as Burney proudly informs her sister Susanna, 'wave[s] the Ceremony of introduction' to introduce himself to his fellow star. Delighted Burney claims that 'among all my numerous puffers, the Name of Sheridan had never reached me' (11 Jan. 1779, EJL III, p.231): 'he holds it [Evelina] superior to Fielding [which . . . ] he said publicly at [Samuel Johnson's Literary] Club' (11 Jan. 1779, EJL III, p.233). On the strength of this very public approbation, Burney flirts with Sheridan, carefully returning the compliment by dropping the names of his characters within a conversation, shrewdly reciprocating the authorial compliment:

Mr Sheridan, joining us, said 'Sir Joshua I have been telling Miss Burney that she must not suffer her pen to lie idle; *ought* she?'

*Sir Joshua* No, indeed, ought she not.

*Mr Sheridan.* --- Do *you*, then, Sir Joshua, persuade her. --- But perhaps you *have* begun some thing? --- may we *ask*? --- will you answer a Question candidly?

*F:B.* --- I don't know, --- but *as* candidly as *Mrs Candour* I think I certainly shall!

*Mr Sheridan.* What, then, are you about now?

*F:B.* --- Why --- twirling my Fan, I think!' (11 Jan. 1779, EJL III, p.234).

Literally playing with Sheridan's statement, 'Fan' also twists and turns, manipulating her own name and writing career.

Indeed, Frances Burney was far from shy in public. Comparing Burney's accounts of herself at Streatham and out and about in society with those of Mrs Thrale, Burney emerges as a woman only too assured about her famous person. According to Burney's letters of February 1779 to her sister Susanna, Thrale finds Burney an indispensable addition to her household, an '*amazing person*', whom she treats with 'all cheerfulness and sweetness'. In her private diaries, Thrale bore witness to quite a different

interpretation of her supposedly complimentary phrases. While Burney affectingly fears 'disgracing so many people' if she contributes too often to conversation, Thrale exposes Burney's *faux* defence of her scruples (*post* 16 Feb. 1779, EJL III, p.247):

her Conversation would be more pleasing if She  
thought less of herself; but her early Reputation  
embarrasses her Talk, & clouds her Mind with  
Elegancies which either come uncalled for or will  
not come at all.<sup>19</sup>

Only too aware of her reputation and only too willing to defend her fame, Burney, puffed up by her literary success, settles into her role of difficult celebrity with ease, feeling she deserves special 'star' treatment.

Burney's self-absorption is often visible in her own accounts of her actions and compounded by a juxtaposition with Thrale's private writings. In December 1779, with Hester Thrale in 'an almost perpetual Fever' over the serious illnesses of her husband (EJL III, p.444), Frances Burney, staying with the Thrales, succumbed to an unnamed 'Fever', which completely overpowered her, forcing her to retire to bed (EJL III, p.445). Thrale wrote to Burney's father, specifying 'Headach and Lassitude' as his daughter's symptoms, ailments befitting any number of languishing anti-heroines in numerous eighteenth-century novels, including her own Lady Louisa Larpent, who, in Evelina, claims to 'have been dying with the headach ever since [she] got up' (EJL III, p.446; Evelina, p.320). Burney closes the same letter with a panegyric on Hester Thrale's nursing skills: 'she has been quite a *slave* --- as well as both *physician* and *Nurse* to me ever since Thursday Eveng --- & I have not taken any thing but out of her own Hand' (EJL III, p.446). Compare, however, her 'slave's' account of the 'illness' of the famous invalid:



Fanny Burney has kept her Room here in my house seven Days with a Fever, or something that she called a Fever: I gave her Med[i]cine, and every Slop with my own hand; took away her dirty Cups, Spoons, &c. moved her Tables, in short was Doctor & Nurse, & Maid --- [ . . . ] and now --- with the true Gratitude of a Wit, She tells me, that the *World* *thinks better of me* for my Civilities to her. It does! does it?<sup>20</sup>

Installing herself as a national treasure who must be cosseted and cared for, Burney, in this account, already feels she has a public, a 'World' to whom Thrale would be accountable if she did not perform her duties. According to the ailing celebrity, Thrale's reputation could only be enhanced in the eyes of Burney's loyal followers for her devoted preservation of so important a person. Burney's behaviour here is strikingly similar in its opposition to the guidelines laid down by her contemporary and later friend, Hester Chapone, in her recently published Letters on the Improvement of the Mind (1773):

[Ill women should] take the more pains to lighten the burden as much as possible, by patience and good humour; and be careful not to let their infirmities break in, on the health, freedom, and enjoyments of others, more than is needful or just. Some ladies think it very improper for any person within their reach, to enjoy a moment's comfort while they are in pain; and make no scruple of sacrificing to their own least convenience, whenever they are indisposed, the proper rest, meals or refreshments of their servants, and even sometimes of their husbands and children.<sup>21</sup>

Burney would again ignore the sensibilities of the author of the Improvement of the Mind when she snubbed her for attempting to interfere in a flirtatious tête-à-tête Burney was conducting with George Cambridge.<sup>22</sup>

Drawing attention to herself rather than cowering in corners in public appears to have been a speciality of Frances Burney. Almost certainly an anorexic, although not secretive about her condition, Burney frequently exploits her insignificant appetite,

actively consuming instead the concern of her fellow diners. The death of a neighbour, Sophia Pitches, prompts Hester Thrale to comment upon the prevalence of a disease that affected numerous followers of fashion in the later eighteenth century. Her nonchalance about the tragedy reads as if death from starvation was frighteningly commonplace: '[Sophia] died of a Disorder common enough to young [:] Women the Desire of Beauty. She had I fancy taken Quack Med'cines to prevent growing fat, or perhaps to repress Appetite'.<sup>23</sup> The MP Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, on a visit to Streatham, expresses concern about Burney's own '*starving system*' and Dr Johnson repeatedly offers her food, from cakes, to 'an Egg or two, & a few slices of Ham, --- or a *Rasher*' (26 March 1779; 21 Aug. 1778, EJL III, p.257; p.87). The italicization of Burney's mechanistic approach suggests either that these are Sir Philip's words, or a code alerting Susanna to her continuing and purposeful abstention from food. Full of nothing but air herself, Burney encourages more puffing from her audience. A Mr Blakeney, an Irish diplomat, falls straight into Burney's trap, pronouncing her indispensability: '[he] pressed me to *Eat & Drink* with much solemnity of kindness, --- 'Why, Mademoiselle, you Eat nothing! [. . .] you'll be no substance, & so & so on, & then we [will] lose you' (18 Nov. 1779, EJL III, p.442). By repeatedly attracting attention to her 'nothingness' Burney effectively emphasises her status as a substantial somebody. It is telling that the one time she mentions food with the prospect of pleasurable consumption, it is not the contents of the table she enjoys, but rather the comments from those around her: 'my *Greediness* for praise was by no means so *gluttonous* as to make me swallow it when [. . .] ill Cooked' (August 1778, EJL III, p.72). Unpalatable except when well done, Burney gorges on favourable comments to inflate her famous image.



### iii. Public Circulation

Burney's image was not only fed by comments of the celebrated coterie. The success of her first and the publication of her second novel led to her literal circulation among her devoted followers, all eager to meet their favourite novelist. Cecilia; or, Memoirs of an Heiress was one of the most eagerly awaited novels of the 1780s. Hype appears to have been generated for the publication months before the book was published in July 1782. Despite Burney's claim that this advance publicity ensured that, 'to [her] great consternation', the book 'is talked of and expected the whole town over' (June 1782, DL, p.143), it was her terror of failure after Evelina's astounding success, not her fear of again exposing herself and her writings to the greedy public. In a letter to Samuel Crisp, two months before Cecilia's entrance into the world, Burney expressed her longing for the book to satiate momentarily the seemingly unquenchable desires of her loyal readers: 'let me have your real opinion [. . .] upon my forbearing to try that of the public: which I now must do, and which my former success makes me hope obtainable' (June 1782, DL, pp.142-43). The 'Advertisement' prefacing Cecilia also reiterates Burney's expectations for the novel's successful launch. A curious mixture of pseudo-humility and arrogance, the paragraph comments on the remarkable progress of her previous 'attempt' and the almost certainly similar trajectory of her current work:

THE indulgence shewn by the Public to EVELINA, which, unpatronized, unaided, and unowned, past through Four Editions in one Year, has encouraged its Author to risk this SECOND attempt. *The animation of success is too universally acknowledged, to make the writer of the following sheets dread much censure of temerity*; though the precariousness of any power to give pleasure, suppresses all vanity of confidence,

and sends CECILIA into the world with scarce more hope, though far more encouragement, than attended her highly-honoured predecessor, EVELINA.<sup>24</sup>

The capitalization of 'second' has never been commented on by Burney critics, but I suggest that it may reinforce Burney's authorial position, dismissing the numerous Burneyesque novels and forgeries capitalizing upon the craze for Burney and her writings after the phenomenal success of Evelina. The Dublin-published Harcourt; A Sentimental Novel. In a Series of Letters (1780) even offered itself as 'By the Authoress of Evelina'.<sup>25</sup> Firmly owning and acknowledging Cecilia, the real 'Author' does not even need to put her name on the front cover.

In similar fashion to Samuel Richardson, Burney circulated the manuscript among friends and family and meticulously noted their responses. Hester Thrale was enchanted by the new production, seemingly because, for her, the text became the author in her physical absence:

My eyes red with reading and crying, I stop every moment to kiss the book and wish it was my Burney! 'Tis the sweetest book, the most interesting, the most engaging. Oh! it beats every other book, even your own other vols., for 'Evelina' was a baby to it. [. . .] But I have not finished my book yet; 'tis late now, and I pant for morning. Nothing but hoarseness made me leave off at all (30 May 1782, DL, pp.140-41).

Now a professional author, Burney was inextricable from her productions in the eyes of her contemporaries. In public, many who had previously addressed her as Evelina, now began to affectionately call their favourite Cecilia and refer to her fictional characters as if they were actual people.<sup>26</sup> And, like Evelina, Cecilia had been written by Frances Burney alone. Unlike Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, and especially the latter, which had been influenced by the desires of Richardson's correspondents, Burney asked



advice, but took little, instead choosing to keep control of her own creations.<sup>27</sup> When Samuel Crisp objected to what he perceived as an unnaturally sombre ending to Cecilia and the loss of the heroine's vast fortune and name, Burney was quick to defend her authorial decisions:

With respect, however, to the great point of Cecilia's fortune, I have much to urge in my own defence, only now I can spare no time, and I must frankly confess I shall think I have written a farce than a serious history, if the whole should end, like the hack Italian operas, with a jolly chorus that makes all parties good and all parties happy!

'Besides', claimed Burney, 'I think the book, in its present conclusion, somewhat original [. . .]. Is not such a middle state more natural, more according to real life, and less resembling every other book of fiction' (6 April 1782, DL, p.136). '[P]repared to fight a good battle', Burney resolutely refuses, as a professional and famous author, to compromise.

It was this originality that Burney believed lifted her above the commonplace and kept her writing free from and sailing above the usual formulaic fare available from 'Mr Noble's circulating library' (6 April 1782, DL, p.137). In the Memoirs of her father (1832), Burney recorded Soame Jenyns' reply as to what made her writing especially enticing for the reader: 'No human being had ever begun Cecilia, or Evelina, who had the power to lay them down unread: pathos, humour, interest, moral, contrast of character, of manners, of language – O! such *mille joli choses*! (sic., Memoirs II, p.292). Shrewdly prizing herself on the physical effects her novels produced on the public, Burney was noted for her sheer readability and ability to keep her reader awake and pondering the issues raised. Like Hester Thrale, readers of Cecilia arrived at social gatherings

apologizing for their haggard appearances. As Dr Johnson informed a delighted Burney, she was the talk of the town: 'he heard of nothing but me, call upon him who would' (23 Dec. 1782, DL, p.211). Accounts of Cecilia's extraordinary effects thus circulated throughout society, and even enticed those disgusted with the soporific qualities of the usual 'trash' only too available on the market. As a jaded reviewer for the Monthly Review illustrated in a brief synopsis of the Burneyesque anonymous publication, Anna: A Sentimental Novel. In A Series of Letters, some novels had 'animation enough to engage some degree of attention, but [were] too deficient in connection and probability to interest the passions'.<sup>28</sup> With so many texts infuriating with a first reading, re-reading was rare and in the same month as Anna received short shrift from the reviewers, Burney dutifully recorded the sleepless nights of friends and contemporaries.<sup>29</sup> As Burney joyfully noted, Hester Chapone had been so particularly affected that she was forced to read the novel twice:

'For my part', said Mrs Chapone, 'when I first read it, I did not cry at all; I was in an agitation that half-killed me, that shook all my nerves, and made me unable to sleep at nights, from the suspense I was in; but I could not cry for excess of eagerness' (18th Jan 1783, DL, p.256).

People were 'curious for the most minute particulars' about Burney's composition techniques and modes of production: "'how came you to write that book that is my first darling --- Cecilia? did the idea come to you by chance? or did you regularly sit down to write by design?'" (23 Dec. 1782, DL, p.208). In contrast to many contemporary novels and novelists, Burney stimulated her public's interest, by shrewdly manipulating emotions, focusing attention and celebration upon the writer behind the work and



provoking the questions of her famous friends and the public alike. As Samuel Badcock, Cecilia's reviewer in the Monthly Review, succinctly encapsulated:

we are at a loss, whether to give preference to the design or the execution: or which to admire most, the purity of the Writer's heart, or the force and extent of her understanding. We see much of the dignity and pathos of Richardson; and much of the acuteness and ingenuity of Fielding. The attention is arrested by the story.<sup>30</sup>

No praise was too high for a writer who enticed her readers on every level, combining and improving upon the two most popular novelists of the eighteenth century, and winning over the admirers of each with a style wholly her own.

Enticing the curious extended impressively to readers who had long ago stopped reading novels. On a visit to the aged writer Mrs Delany's house in January 1783, Burney recorded a lengthy celebration of Cecilia's effects on her more elderly audience. Mrs Delany expressed aptly the sentiments of many of Burney's readers, eager for a glimpse of the latest literary star: "I wished so impatiently to see one from whom I have received such extraordinary pleasure, that [. . .] I could not bear to put it off another day" (DL, p.250). For Delany, Burney's characters have made such an impression upon her imagination that she witnesses likenesses everywhere and in everything. Even when apologizing for her obsession, she refers to the characters as 'people', unable to acknowledge their unreality: "You must forgive us, Miss Burney; it is not right to talk of these people; but we don't know how to speak at all now without, they are so always in our minds!" (DL, p.252). When the Dowager Duchess of Portland arrived, Burney met one of the most reluctant readers of contemporary novels. Usually deliberately deaf to publicity, the Duchess originally 'protest[ed]' vehemently about reading the novel of the moment:

'I declared that five volumes could never be attacked; but since I began I have read it three times. [. . .] I held out so long against reading them, [. . .] remembering the cry there was in favour of 'Clarissa' and 'Sir Charles Grandison', when they came out; and those I could never read. I was teased into trying both of them; but I was disgusted with their tediousness, and could not read eleven letters, with all the effort I could make' (DL, p.255).

The comparison with Richardson is too great for Burney to stop writing her reminiscences of the evening, so, despite, a claim that her hand is paralysed with the crippling effects of praise, rendering her 'really ashamed to write on', Burney continued copying down the panegyrics for several pages. Tellingly, in the Duchess of Portland's opinion, it is the marketing of Richardson's works that failed to engage her interest, in comparison to the more effective publicity generated by Burney's novels. Similarly, while Richardson's words manifested themselves in the 'melancholy faces' of 'every body that did read Clarissa', Burney's characters affect the body with more pleasurable impresssions: "'Cry, to be sure we did. O Mrs Delany, shall you ever forget how we cried? But then we had so much laughter to make us amends, we were never left to sink under our concern'". The social 'discussi[ons]' and 'disputes' (DL, p.256, p.257) launched with Cecilia all contribute to the book's popularity and Burney's fame. Although the author again 'wished a thousand times during the discourse to run out of the room', she remained firmly seated, not interjecting and thus shrewdly allowing the old women to carry on their exaltation of the Burney name in her absent presence (DL, p.258).

Barely ten days after the publication of Cecilia, Edmund Burke, who lauded Burney for her 'conquest' of the faithless Duchess (DL, 8th Dec. 1782, p.193), sent Burney a fan letter, which was carefully preserved and copied into her journal, along with another



from Elizabeth Montagu in 1785. This was not the first such letter she had received. After Evelina's publication, Burney was amused but also flattered to be the recipient of praise via 'queer anonymous letter[s]' (Sept. 1781, DL, p.97) from some of the most unlikely quarters:

Madam, --- I have lately read the three elegant volumes of 'Evelina', which were penned by you; and are desired by my friends, which are very numerous, to entreat the favour of you to oblige the public with a fourth.

Now, if this desire of mine should meet with your approbation, and you will honour the public with another volume (for it will not be ill-disposed time), it will greatly add to the happiness of,

Honoured madam, a sincere admirer  
Of you and 'Evelina'.

Burney laughed at this missive from the home of 'Branghtons and Smiths', Snow Hill, but the fact that she preserved the letter suggests how important praise from all angles was for Frances Burney. It is noticeable that this 'admirer' professes his fascination both with author and work and feels that flattery will be able to alter the notions of a famous person. For a City dweller, who would not be able to see Burney in the social circles she frequented, the directness of the epistolary mode seems to answer his purpose of addressing and influencing a celebrity. Burke and Montagu, however, were different cases. Although both personally renowned for their own contributions to politics and literature respectively, they were only too willing to humble themselves to express their adulation of the latest star. Montagu was already acquainted with Burney and was given to physical intimations of her respect in public, on one occasion even 'put[ting] her hands upon [Burney's] shoulders' (17th Jan. 1784, DL, p.304). Even this famed woman, whom Burney had once referred to as 'such [a] celebrity in the Literary world', was not averse to ingratiating herself with the novelist, fearing to 'hav[e] intruded this long letter on [her]

time and pleasure' (*post* 15 Sept. 1778, EJL III, p.145): 'indeed, my dear madam, if all people could, few would be able to withstand the temptation of corresponding with you' (16th Dec. 1785, in DL, p.405, p.404).

Edmund Burke's rapid response to Cecilia also expressed the tantalizing spell Burney had cast over a country, which, as Mrs Buller noted, was 'the most divided of any in the known world, alike in literature and politics': how astonishing it was that Burney's 'living pen could be found [to] bring about a universal harmony of opinion' (Memoirs II, p.292). Offering his 'best thanks for the very great instruction and entertainment [he] had received from the new present [Burney] had bestowed on the public', Burke's letter of 29 July 1782 reads like a *billet-doux*. According to Burke, Burney has seduced him so effectively that he can talk of nothing else in social gatherings: 'I might trespass on your delicacy if I should fill my letter to you with what I fill my conversation to others' (DL, p.149). Introducing the topic of 'so favourite and fashionable a work' and its 'most universal success' into general discussion, Burke confirmed later in the year, would only ensure that he would be 'merely one in a multitude' of the novel's admirers (8th Dec. 1782, DL, p.194). Burke's delight at Burney's presence at this same party even prompts an amused exclamation from Burke's wife at her husband's excessive behaviour: "'See, see! what a flirtation Mr Burke is beginning with Miss Burney! and before my face too!' (8th Dec. 1782, DL, p.194). In his July letter, Burke's only criticisms are double-edged, noting Burney's occasionally excessive powers of invention: 'If there is any fault [. . .], it is one in which you are in no great danger of being imitated. Justly as your characters are drawn, perhaps they are too numerous' (DL, p.148). As a consequence, in 'an age distinguished by producing extraordinary women', Burke places Burney at the zenith of



female fame: 'I hardly dare tell you where my opinion would place you amongst them' (DL, p.149). As Burney herself wrote to Hester Thrale a month after Burke's letter was received, celebrity was deeply enticing: 'If it does but attract, as dear Dr J says, I am happy be it which way it will' (August 1782, DL, p.154).

Admirers had an equal opportunity to witness Frances Burney in person in the provinces, illustrating the widespread influence of her celebrated name. Cecilia circulated literally in local libraries and thus among the populations of towns and cities all over the country. In a checklist of the holdings of provincial libraries of the 1780s, Cecilia's reach was further than any other novel published in the decade. Out of a total of 46 circulating libraries, Cecilia was held by most: 36, or 78.26% of the major libraries. The second most popular novel of the decade, Agnes Maria Bennett's Anna; or, Memoirs of a Welch Heiress (1785) lagged nearly 20% behind Cecilia, with only 27 of 45 libraries stocking this Burneyesque novel. Novels published in the same year as Burney's seemingly did not stand a chance. Robert Bage's Mount Henneth, A Novel, despite reviews which proclaimed its 'superior merit'<sup>31</sup> appears in exactly half the number of catalogues as Cecilia, while the same Anna: A Sentimental Novel earlier dismissed by the Monthly is present only in 12 of 46 libraries.<sup>32</sup> Unsurprisingly, when the literary phenomenon was in town, people flocked to catch a glimpse of the author herself. After the publication of Evelina, Burney visited numerous places with the Thrales, discovering that her novel was 'always *out*' at a bookseller's in Reigate in May 1779 (EJL III, p.270), while in Brighton with the Thrales in October of the same year, Burney found herself 'prodigiously in Fashion', 'hear[ing] of Compliments and fine speeches almost Daily' (EJL III, p.400). On the latter trip, she met Augusta Byron, who displayed such a 'mad

enthusiasm about [her] as [Susanna and Burney], at her Age, should have had about Richardson', that her mother half-feared that 'tis well if she does not hire a chaise and run away' with her beloved star (EJL III, p.424).

With Cecilia, Burney's marketability increased massively, a proven fact that Burney witnessed at first hand with the Thrales in 1782. In her Brighton Journal for October, Burney joked about her ability to provoke unsubtle gaping from admirers: 'you would suppose me something dropped from the skies. Even Richardson and Fielding could rise from the Grave, I should bid fair for supplanting them in the *popular Eye*, for being a *fair female*, I am *accounted quelque chose extraordinaire*'.<sup>33</sup> Although Burney mocks her followers here, she is deeply flattered if bemused at times by the over-zealous attention paid to her in public places. Again expressing her discomfort with the situation, Burney cannot resist a public appearance at the 'Rooms' in Brighton. As Mr Pepys comments: "And has Miss Burney courage to venture to the Rooms? I wonder she dares". She does dare, however, and contends with the 'violent' 'staring and whispering', "'That's she!'" "That's the famous Miss Burney'" with aplomb (27th Oct. 1782, DL, p.160). Professing that she 'shall certainly escape going' out anymore while in Brighton, Burney has broken her resolution by the very next day and returns to the Rooms within a week. The staring is not confined to the revellers at the Rooms either. Hester Thrale grants her milliner, Mrs Cockran, "'a sight of [Burney]'", because she had "'begged it so hard'". Mrs Cockran is overpowered by the introduction to her heroine:

'Oh, ma'am, you don't know what a favour this is, to see you! I have longed for it so long! It is quite a comfort to me, indeed. Oh, ma'am, how clever you must be! All the ladies I deal with are quite distracted by Cecilia, --- and I got it myself. Oh, ma'am, how sensible you must be! It does my



heart good to see you' (27th Oct.1782, DL, pp.160-61).

By the following day, it is almost certain that the 'famous' Miss Burney would have had her image and words circulated among Mrs Cockran's friends and clients. '[P]erpetually discovering that [she is] as well known [. . .] by people [she is] unconscious of having ever seen, & quite certain [she has] never spoken to', Burney was as popular a celebrity in the provinces with ordinary people as she was in London literary society, thanks to the circulation of her work through that all-pervading mechanism of fame, the local 'Tittle Tattle', compounded by the loyalty of avid readers at circulating libraries across the country.<sup>34</sup>

The Burney phenomenon was further propagated through literature and criticism. As The European Magazine realized in its review of Cecilia in September 1782, Burney had taken the novel to new heights both of quality and of popularity: 'the productions of the ingenious Miss Burney, have very much engaged the attention of the public. [. . .] The story [is] at once probable and new. [. . .] [O]ur fair author's talent for description is bold and masterly'.<sup>35</sup> In 1784, Burney's novel was still so entrenched in the public mind that, two years after the original launch of Cecilia, articles on Burney could still guarantee a favourable reception and continue to provoke heated discussion. Published the same year as Cecilia, Laclos's novel Les Liaisons Dangereuses had cause a stir in France and would cause even more outrage as its translation, Dangerous Connections, hit London two years later, provoking critical comments like 'delusive and dangerous' and 'too diabolical to be realized'.<sup>36</sup> Laclos addressed critical comment in a spirited defence of the novel, originally published in the Mercure de France over April and May 1784:

Of all literary genres, none is less valued than the novel; but

none is more sought after nor more eagerly read. This contradiction between theory and practice has often been noted; but contented readers do not let this fact trouble them. [. . .] [They want] a novel, like any other work, [to] amuse, instruct, interest.<sup>37</sup>

The text Laclos used to illustrate the value of the genre was, unsurprisingly, the 'deservedly celebrated' Cecilia, by the woman he designated as the 'worthy celebrity', who combines all these qualities, Frances Burney (p.502). According to Laclos, Cecilia is created by a 'masterly hand' (p.505), who is only too aware of how to manipulate the feelings of her privileged reader, who 'shares' in the action and whose reactions Laclos concentrates upon most noticeably in his analysis (p.517). Possessing 'finesse and profundity, subtlety and delicacy, grace and sincerity' (p.501), Laclos places Burney firmly in a literary Hall of Fame, along with the other most popular and critically acclaimed novels of the century: '*Clarissa*, displaying the most genius; *Tom Jones*, the most well-written novel, and *la Nouvelle Heloise*, the most beautiful' (p.521). The only female author in this illustrious list, Burney is lauded, effectively, as the greatest living novelist.

Exalted with similarly renowned authors, Frances Burney also appears in William Godwin's anonymously published mock one-off periodical, The Herald of Literature; or A Review of the Most Considerable Publications that Will Be Made in the Course of the Ensuing Winter (1784). Taking the lead from Burney's dedication to Evelina, Godwin addresses the collection to those self-appointed 'guardians of literature' 'The Authors of the Monthly and Critical Reviews', parodying their self-importance, ridiculous verbosity, lack of perception and biased puffing techniques.<sup>38</sup> Reviewers' tendency to quote lengthy extracts, suggesting their need either to fill a word limit or inability to carry out their task



correctly by reading the text selectively, is also mocked extensively in Godwin's 'reviews'. Most remarkably, while many of the diverse texts purportedly reviewed are actual productions of the author named, Godwin recreates the original text to create a double parody with the likes of historians Gibbon and Robertson. While the historical narratives are praised, both are relegated surreptitiously to the feet of the reviewers' godlike David Hume, comically reiterating authorial partiality: 'Let not the living historian be offended. To be second to Hume, in our opinion might satisfy the ambition of a Livy or a Tacitus' (p.41). Frances Burney is the only named woman and only novelist reviewed. Given that Godwin was working on his first fictional works, Damon and Delia and Imogen, it is not surprising that he should choose both to attack and indirectly praise his most popular contemporary and competitor. Inventing Louisa; or, Memoirs of A Woman of Quality for the 'celebrated' Burney, Godwin presents a work whose 'originality' is paradoxically familiar (p.61): 'though this line of portrait seemed exhausted by Congreve and Richardson, we will venture to pronounce Louisa a perfect original' (p.64). The quoted 'extract' introduces the prospective reader to Louisa and her friend Olivia, who has just attempted to kidnap Louisa's eventual husband, Brucknel, whose ineffectual weakness makes him all too easily 'r[u]n away with' by the romantic Olivia. Although brought up a 'recluse', Olivia is an outspoken feminist, demanding to be 'heard': "'What have I done that I should expose me to the lash of each unlicensed tongue?'" (p.62). Making a bid for fame, an attempt to become a Somebody, Olivia, Godwin's idea of a Burney heroine, is an intriguing interpretation of a creation of an author, who has become a byword for the reluctant star, who properly avoided public notice at all costs.

#### iv. Female Fame

Frances Burney's heroines follow the public example of their author, treading a fine line between perceived personal modesty and public virtue and the more designing attempts to achieve a name in the world. An eighteenth-century synonym for a virtuous female reputation, 'fame', in Burney's published and unpublished writings often mingles inextricably with the desire for a celebrated image. Charitable benevolence was considered an acceptable manifestation of public, but feminine virtue. As Dr Gregory illustrated in the 'Religion' section of A Father's Legacy to His Daughters:

The best effect of your religion will be a diffusive humanity to all in distress. Set apart a certain proportion of your income as sacred to charitable purposes. But in this, as well as in the practice of every other duty, carefully avoid ostentation. Vanity is always defeating her own purposes. Fame is one of the natural rewards of virtue. Do not pursue her, she will follow you.<sup>39</sup>

Burney's astounding success with Evelina encouraged her actually to thematize the manifestations of female fame in her second novel Cecilia; the questions surrounding women and publicity clearly prominent in her thoughts. Indeed, the OED accords Burney the distinction of being the first to employ the verb 'to come out' in this novel: a specifically female public presence (Cecilia, p.468). As a wealthy heiress, a personification of 'Virtue' (p.768), Cecilia Beverley dreams of redistributing her income philanthropically among the poor and needy: 'she regarded herself as an agent of Charity, and already in idea anticipated the rewards of a good and faithful delegate: so animating are the designs of disinterested benevolence! so pure is the bliss of intellectual philanthropy' (p.56). But Cecilia's 'disinterested benevolence' becomes suspiciously self-



interested. Enthralled by her own goodness, Cecilia finds the thrill of hearing herself celebrated more enticing than the actual act of giving: 'her life had never appeared to her so important, [. . .] to view such sights, and have power to say "*These deeds are mine*", what, to a disposition fraught with tenderness and benevolence, could give purer self-applause, or more exquisite satisfaction' (pp.203-4). When she loses her name and fortune after marriage to Mortimer Delvile, Cecilia's terror at her loss of publicity appears even more blatantly self-centred:

by this unforeseen vicissitude of fortune, she was suddenly, from being an object of envy and admiration, sunk into distress and, and threatened with disgrace; from being every where caressed, and by every voice praised, she blushed to be seen, and expected to be censured; and from being generally regarded as an example of happiness, and a model of virtue, she was now in one moment to appear to the world, an outcast from her own house, yet received into no other! a bride unclaimed by a husband! an HEIRESS, dispossessed of all wealth! (pp.868-69).

Her moment in the limelight over, Cecilia misses not the ability to give, but the resulting praise of admirers.

Brief Reflections on the Emigrant French Clergy (1793) is Burney's least discussed and least well-known text, but the one which engages most obviously with the representation of women in the public sphere and the efficacy of self-advertisement for the double meaning of 'female fame'. Commissioned by literary hostess and friend of the Burneys, Frances Crewe, Burney's small pamphlet is dedicated to eliciting the support of the 'Ladies of Great Britain' in funding the impoverished émigrés. The opening page announces that the Reflections are written by 'The Author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*', a clear marketing ploy to advance the cause among Burney's many followers who may have

never considered purchasing a political tract. Although anti-Revolution in her brutally gory and vivid depictions of Terror-fuelled atrocities, Burney's position on female publicity is more complicated. Opening the text with a pathetic-sounding 'Apology', the Reflections immediately contradict the expected grovelling by firmly placing women in the public sphere:

HOWEVER wide from the allotted boundaries and appointed province of Females may be all interference in public matters, even in the agitating season of general calamity; it does not thence follow that they are exempt from all public claims, or mere passive spectatresses of the moral as well as of the political œconomy of human life.<sup>40</sup>

The supposedly 'appointed province' of women provides a receptacle for political affairs, where issues are eagerly circulated and acted upon: 'public affairs assume the interest of private feelings, affect domestic peace, and occupy not merely the most retired part of mankind, but even mothers, wives, and children with solicitude irresistible' (pp.1-2). Equally challenging is Burney's insistence that charity should be recognized as a sexless virtue: 'By addressing myself to females, I am far from informing that charity is exclusively their praise; no, it is a virtue as manly as it is gentle; it is christian, in one word, and ought therefore to be universal' (p.7). It is women only, however, to whom Burney offers the rewards of 'BENEFICENCE' (p.4). Public acclaim will be theirs, their names famed in a specifically '*female tradition*', which 'will not fail to hand down to posterity the formers and protectresses of a plan which, if successful, will exalt for ever the female annals of Great Britain' (p.5). As Dr John Gregory claimed, female public benevolence was a perfectly legitimate means of virtuous self-publicity. Intervention in



political processes, claims Burney, wins women both contemporary and posthumous reputation and celebrity.

Burney's construction of female fame in the Reflections suggest that she places a high value upon carefully controlled self-advertisement and public action, devices employed by herself in public and by her heroines, especially Juliet Granville in The Wanderer (1814) and Lady Smatter in the unpublished plays The Witlings (1779) and The Woman-Hater (c.1800). Forced into searching for employment, by the loss of her purse in a dramatic escape from the Terror of revolutionary France, Juliet, a virtuoso musician excels in the dramatic arts. Despite claiming early in the novel that "'All public appeals [. . .] are injurious to female fame'" and making a fuss about appearing in public, Juliet revels in the applause she receives from her audiences.<sup>41</sup> Playing the flirtatious Lady Townly of Cibber's The Provok'd Husband (1728) in a private theatrical at the home of some of her fellow escapees from France, Juliet cannot hide her pleasure at her reception<sup>42</sup>: 'Surprised still more than all those around her, at the pleasure which she found she had communicated, some share of it now stole insensibly into her own bosom' (p.96). When economic necessity obliges Juliet to take to the stage, she does so with reluctance, but with an amount of obsessive preparation, revealing her 'desire to do well' and shine in the limelight:

She durst not venture to walk out except in the sun-shine; she forbore to refresh herself near an open window; and retreated from every unclosed door, lest humidity, or the sharpness of the wind, or a sudden storm, should again affect her voice; and she guarded her whole person from the changing elements, as sedulously as if age, infirmity, or disease, had already made her health the slave of prudential forethought (p.320).

Acknowledging the hardships of stars, Juliet sympathises with the artistic lot: 'how little do we know either of the labours, or the privations, of those whose business it is to administer pleasure to the public! We receive it so lightly, that we imagine it to be lightly given!' (p.320). Compelled to perform through necessity, Juliet exerts herself to the best of her ability, becoming a celebrity, enduring the trials but also seduced by the successes.<sup>43</sup>

Appearing in both The Witlings and The Woman-Hater, Lady Smatter is similarly starry-eyed. Smatter's presumed resemblance to Elizabeth Montagu led to the much-discussed suppression of Burney's first attempt at a stage comedy, to which she had been encouraged by the likes of playwrights Sheridan and Murphy. Burney's supposed capitulation to her 'Daddies' seems less submissive when the fame-obsessed character resurfaced in The Woman-Hater.<sup>44</sup> The cast-list that accompanies the manuscript copy of The Woman-Hater reveals that Burney fully intended to stage the production, which, given her belief in her celebrity status, typically includes the most renowned contemporary actors, Sarah Siddons, Dorothy Jordan, Thomas King and John Philip Kemble.<sup>45</sup> As Burney's first work after the phenomenal success of Evelina, The Witlings, is, unsurprisingly, deeply concerned with the mechanics of fame and offers an ironic, insider's view of the workings of the celebrated coterie. As head of the self-congratulating Esprit Party, a literary club for the amusingly ignorant, Lady Smatter's own 'desire of celebrity is too well known for [her] motives to be doubted'.<sup>46</sup> When her nephew Beaufort's fiancée Cecilia loses her fortune in a stock-market crash, Smatter calls off the match. To humiliate Smatter and re-unite the lovers, Beaufort's friend, the cynical Censor reveals the power of the media to make or break a reputation, particularly a



female one. As the plagiarizing poet Dabler realises: 'we men do not suffer in the World by Lampoons as do the poor Ladies do; they, indeed, may be quite --- quite ruined by them' (V, 741-3). Censor lists the multiplicity of means aiding defamation, the multimedia ways to manipulate an image, including 'Drop[ping] lampoons in every Coffee-House', 'Compos[ing] Daily Epigrams for all the Papers', 'Send[ing] libels to every corner of the Town', 'Mak[ing] all the Ballad Singers resound your Deeds', and 'treating the Patagonian Theatre with a Poppet to represent you' (V, 832-41). Smatter finally capitulates when Censor offers to employ the same mechanisms to laud her name, tantalizing her with 'the applause that awaits [her] in the World' (V, 862). Saving her reputation by 'Mak[ing] a Friend of the Writer' (V, 811), Smatter, a representative of famous woman, seems to have lost control of her own public image.

Or has she? By stripping bare the mechanics of literary celebrity, Burney reveals profound awareness of how to control and keep control of reputation in a world of egotistical stars. Smatter's genuinely terrified reaction to her possible ruin has often overshadowed critical discussions of the play, which ignore how able she is to manipulate her own image through her position as a celebrated patron. If Smatter had had the inclination or the awareness she could easily have fought back in the press. Although she is not clever enough in this play to seek revenge, Burney does leave the possibility open for the female retribution. In The Woman-Hater Smatter seems no less ignorant, but her fortune allows her to keep a firm hold upon her name. Her benevolence is disseminated across a wide variety of genres:

'twas but last week that sonnet cost me ten Guineas.  
But then, how pretty it was! & the beginning of this, the  
inscription of that tract was fifteen; but then, again, what

a precious morsel! & now, the dedicatory ode this  
 morning has cost me twenty --- but who could offer  
 less?<sup>47</sup>

As Smatter realizes, no self-generated effort, no fame. Of course, Burney also illustrates how easily authors can manipulate the patronage system to fund their own enterprises and see their texts celebrated. In the misogynistic society of the play, Smatter's endeavours to promote her name contrast sharply to the general expectations of women. As the 'Woman-Hater' himself, Sir Roderick, Smatter's jilted love from their youth, claims vociferously:

A poor feeble, puling, useless Race! changing their minds  
 every half hour; with more freaks in their composition than  
 blood, or bones; fit for nothing but making faces at bad  
 dinners, and squalling at bad roads; and so helpless, if they  
 fall into a ditch, they are drowned, they are drowned, ---  
 and if you don't put the meat into their mouths, they are  
 starved (IV, 53-59).

Contending with society's expectations of female nothingness, Smatter and Burney herself effectively inflate their public images, manipulating the fame machine to launch themselves as celebrated Somebodies. Frances Burney combined the politics of female modesty with a desire for public celebration, achieving a unique cultural position, renowned both as a female novelist of reputation and a virtuoso public performer.

**Coda: '[T]his egotistic history' [Memoirs II, p.121]**

After the publication of The Wanderer and the death of her beloved father in 1814, came nearly twenty years of silence from the ageing Frances Burney. Although The Wanderer



had sold out before publication, with advance copies obtained gleefully by luminaries such as Lord Byron, Germaine de Staël, and Sir James Mackintosh, and, as the British Critic put it, excited ‘public expectation’ to a scarcely imaginable frenzy, it had been received disappointingly as possessing ‘more than [the public] could have expected from most other female writers of romance, but less than they could have wished from the pen of so distinguished a lady as M[me] D’Arblay’.<sup>48</sup> In 1832, at the age of eighty, Burney responded to her critics by employing her father’s Memoirs to tell the story of her own rise to fame, simultaneously achieving the double coup of reiterating her deserved position as the most fêted living novelist and puffing herself within the Memoirs of a supposedly oppressive father. This was a fact certainly not lost upon reviewers of the biography. As the acerbic John Wilson Croker noted in the Quarterly Review: ‘Mme. D.Arblay [. . .] conceals from her readers, and perhaps from herself, that it is *her own Memoirs*, and *not* those of her father that she has been writing’.<sup>49</sup>

Croker’s perhaps ironic suggestion that Burney is unaware of her own participation in the Memoirs is certainly not borne out by the actual text. Here, Burney is only too alert to her position in her father’s life. Instead of becoming an appendage to her father’s career, Burney seems to suggest exactly the opposite, regularly refusing to suppress comments which prove her own undisputed right to literary laurels. ‘[A]pparent egotisms’ may be more than ‘pardoned’, claims Burney, determined to set the record straight (I, viii). After all, no one else can so accurately reproduce events: ‘the Editor, with less unwillingness, though with conscious awkwardness, approaches this egotistic history, from some recent information that the obscurity in which its origin was encircled, has left, even yet, a spur to curiosity and conjecture’ (II, p121). There then

follows fifty pages of anything but ‘conscious awkwardness’ about the publication of her first novel, which only adds to the sense that Burney was more than eager to ‘see how a production of her own would figure in that author-like form’ (II, p.145). Cecilia adds only to Burney’s renowned name, as further reactions of the famous to her productions place her even higher on the pedestal of celebrity: ‘But how I blush to think of Mrs Boscawen, Mrs and Miss Thrale, Mrs Carter, Mrs Garrick, Miss More, Mrs Chapone, Mrs Gregory – nay Mrs Montagu herself – being called upon to scene such as this, not as personages of the drama; but as auditresses and spectatresses!’ (II, p.296). Confined to the wings, other famous women retreat dumbstruck, while Burney occupies the limelight, centre-stage. At the end of her long and successful life, Frances Burney proves only too readily that she can mount a ‘self-defence – a proud self-defence!’ of her illustrious career (II, p.122).



## Chapter V

**Germaine de Staël: 'When one can no longer find peace of mind in obscurity, it is necessary to look for strength in celebrity'<sup>1</sup>**

I then sat an hour with Miss Vardill, who related an interesting anecdote of Madame de Staël. A country girl, the daughter of a clergyman, had accidentally met with a translation of 'Delphine' and 'Corinne', which so powerfully affected her, in her secluded life, as quite to turn her brain. And hearing that Madame de Staël was in London, she wrote to her, offering to become her attendant or amanuensis. Madame de Staël's secretary, in a formal answer, declined the proposal. But her admirer was so intent on being in her service in some way, that she came up to London, and stayed a few days with a friend, who took her to the great novelist, and, speaking in French, gave a hint of the young girl's mind. Madame de Staël, with great promptitude and kindness, administered the only remedy that was likely to be effectual. The girl almost threw herself at her feet, and earnestly begged to be received by her. The Baroness very kindly, but decidedly, remonstrated with her on the folly of her desire. 'You may think', she said, 'it is an enviable lot to travel over Europe, and see all that is most beautiful and distinguished in the world; but the joys of home are more solid; domestic life affords more permanent happiness than any that fame can give. You have a father - I have none. You have a home - I was led to travel because I was driven from mine. Be content with your lot; if you knew mine, you would not desire it'. With such admonitions she dismissed the petitioner. The cure was complete. The young woman returned to her father, became more steadily industrious, and without ever speaking of her adventure with Madame de Staël, silently profited by it. She is now living a life of great respectability, and her friends consider that her cure was wrought by the only hand by which it could have been effected.<sup>2</sup>

Reminiscing three years after the death of Germaine de Staël, Henry Crabb Robinson renarrates a complex story of fame and desire. Desire for fame, the consequences of the desire for fame and, most prominently, desire to be 'cured' of the desire for fame all make appearances in this seemingly familiar tale of seduction and seclusion, where rural innocence is corrupted by aristocratic, metropolitan, even cosmopolitan, *savoir faire*. In similar fashion to a Laclosian fiction, however, all is not what it seems. The capturing of

the reader's imagination is here taken to its highest extreme, resulting in total identification with the celebrated author, whose spirit possesses the admirer, impelling her to escape her restricted background and seek out fame and fortune with her idol. Disappointingly for her admirer de Staël does not suggest an elopement, but counsels the girl to be content with her position and return to respectability, which advice, like all good heroines, she dutifully fulfils, instead gaining her community credit through 'industry' and 'profit'. Although her 'adventure' appears to have been silenced, seven years later it is still in circulation and even passed onto friend and chronicler of the famous, Crabb Robinson. Far from expunging the exciting anecdote from the life of the clergyman's daughter, this story will clearly enhance her prospects, her fleeting moments with her favourite writer a discussion point, her 'cure' clearly effected by her contact with the celebrated Germaine de Staël.

It is the reported wording, however, and thus implications of de Staël's rejection speech, which provides the most ambiguous position on desire and fame in this extract from Crabb Robinson's diary. Perhaps the longevity of the supposedly silenced story can be explained by de Staël's advice 'against' the courting of fame and its attendant 'ills'. Rather than ensuring that her admirer will be repulsed by her idol's celebrated lifestyle, de Staël's words point to an all-too enticing alternative of travel and a distinguished name to rival the staid solidity and permanence of the family home. Setting up an opposition between the delights of movement and the stability of security, de Staël continues to stress the differences between herself and her admirer, demarcating a line between famous person and follower which should never be crossed. Although employing negatives to persuade the girl to remain with 'home' and 'father', de Staël effectively



pinpoints the sources of the probably oppressive background reasons which her admirer saw nowhere in the lives of the liberated heroines of the novels of her favourite. Similarly, by reiterating why she has been forced to flee her home (the exile demanded by Napoleon), crossing the continent, and seeking a final destination in London, de Staël hints obliquely at her public importance and the fact that the metropolis that year (1813<sup>5</sup>) would witness the publication of the book that had contributed to her dismissal from France, De l'Allemagne, an event that would corroborate her celebrated European status and make her the political and social toast of the capital. Skimming the surface of her 'curative' advice to the country girl ensures that one misses the inflammatory undercurrents of exactly the opposite: the effective encouragement of finding strength in celebrity when tired of and by obscurity.

Unlike the other writers discussed in this study, Germaine de Staël was born famous, as well as later carving out her own career as a being apart from her celebrated parents, the *salonnière* Suzanne Necker, née Curchod, friend and correspondent of Rousseau and Gibbon, and Jacques Necker, valued finance minister to Louis XVI. Unsurprisingly, fame was a continual concern with de Staël, an obsession even, which would saturate her fictional, political, and travel writings and permeate her appearances in public. From her earliest publication, an *éloge* to her own idolized Jean-Jacques Rousseau, to her posthumously published Dix Années d'Exil and Considérations sur la Révolution Française, *la gloire* frequently underpins many of her arguments, ensuring, I would contend, that she becomes one of the most important fame theorists of her period. This is not to suggest that her analyses of fame are as consistent as her employment of it to investigate and often provide a solution to cultural and political problems post-

Revolution. What is so fascinating about de Staël's engagement with fame is her continuing complexity of response towards her own and the celebrated status of others, especially her contemporary rival for laurels, Napoleon Bonaparte. *Pace* Joanne Wilkes, in her recent study of Byron and de Staël, this engagement is concerned with both men and women, and not simply the slight mention of the latter as 'novelists in France and Britain whose works focussed on private life'.<sup>3</sup> The reception of her writing in Britain during 1813-1814, including the publication of the politically sensitive De l'Allemagne and the republication of her other works, provides not only an insight into how the fame game continued to operate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the most sustained example of how de Staël's ideas about *la gloire*, women, and *la gloire* and women affected and stimulated a nation, in this case English writers of both sexes, to respond to the presence of the lady who 'enjoyed a European reputation' and her theories.<sup>4</sup>

### **i. The Politics of Public Opinion**

Germaine de Staël's literary career began in 1788 with a defence of the eighteenth-century's most famous man. Lettres sur les écrits et le caractère de J.J.Rousseau is de Staël's attempt to sing Rousseau's praises while simultaneously launching her own bid for literary glory. The Lettres repeatedly trouble contemporary critics of de Staël's feminist politics for buying unquestioningly into the 'Rousseauvian view' of women and publicity, but I believe that although de Staël is clearly a besotted admirer of Jean-Jacques, she is more canny in the publication of this *éloge* than she is given credit.<sup>5</sup> Her decision to



defend such a man as Rousseau would be sure to provoke comment and reaction, thus directing attention from the dead philosopher towards the young author and her assessments. De Staël effectively uses Rousseau and his renown as a springboard to greater things for herself. This was a point not lost upon the original reviewers of the text, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, who disapproved of de Staël's blatant 'contending for a literary wreath'.<sup>6</sup> The opening sentences to the Preface of the first edition make this aim abundantly obvious:

There is still nothing to praise Rousseau: I feel a need to see my admiration expressed. [. . .] I believe that men of genius may only be judged by a small number of superior minds, but they must accept tributes of gratitude from anyone. Writings which aim at the happiness of the human race, place their authors on the same level as those who have been immortalized by their actions. [. . .] People kind enough to predict some talent in me may blame me for rushing to deal with a subject far above any ability I may ever hope some day to possess. But who can tell if time is going to give or to take? Who dares to predict the progress of his own mind? How can we agree to wait, putting off the expression of urgent feelings to some distant future?<sup>7</sup>

As the deliberately collectible posthumous edition of her Anecdotes, Bons Mots, Maximes, Pensées et Réflexions, Staëlliana, suggests, de Staël identified with Jean-Jacques most strongly on the question of fame: 'She was conscious of her superiority, and like J-J Rousseau, she did not have the false modesty to deny it'.<sup>8</sup> And, in similar fashion to Jean-Jacques, she is quite assured that her fame will be uniquely bound up with her writing, and thus a feminized celebrity of her own construction and maintenance will result.

De Staël's tribute seeks to excuse Jean-Jacques from what she considers to be unfair charges of public misdemeanour and immorality by attributing his behaviour to his overt idealism, suggesting that he was born, inescapably, 'contemplative', behaving like a child

while simultaneously obeyed as an oracle by his listeners and readers (OC I, p.84). On the eve of revolution, de Staël is swift paradoxically to acknowledge Jean-Jacques' foibles as well as the political consequences of his 'defects'. His effect upon an audience is portrayed, however, as almost innocent, but not quite. De Staël suggests obliquely that as far as reader manipulation is concerned, Jean-Jacques may have been more aware than even she seems to believe on the surface of this tribute. Discussing La Nouvelle Héloïse analytically to begin with, the author soon falls into a swooning panegyric: 'Ah! how painful it is to come to the end of a reading which has interested us as an event in our own lives, and which, without fluttering [*trembler*] our heart, has set in motion all our feelings and all our thoughts!' (p.44). The steadiness of this reader's heart and the movement of her powerful faculties of creativity ensures that de Staël learns from the affective abilities of her master while still keeping hold of her own presence of mind: the swoon is a knowing action. Dissecting the Rousseauvian method of reader seduction, de Staël emphasises the profound importance of the skill to keep an audience enthralled, the power of '*l'eloquence*': 'People often talk of the danger of eloquence, but I believe it to be fundamental when virtue and passion are opposed; [. . .] it is eloquence alone which can add a strong enough impetus to reason and enough life to fight with equal strength against the passions' (pp.61-62).

Seeking an achievement of this important equilibrium in her *éloge* de Staël concludes with a reminder to the reader not only of Rousseau's greatness, but, indirectly, the achievement of her own eloquence. Like Jean-Jacques, she learns throughout this text to write oneself into a work, while not appearing to dominate the subject, yet still remaining an unforgettable presence in search of one's own glory. In the Sixth Letter 'On



Rousseau's Character' de Staël analyses the position of the author in the autobiographical memoirs: 'Finally I feel that he wrote his memoirs to shine as a historian rather than as the hero of the story' (p.79). Even with the presumed detachment implied by the status of historian instead of the incessant glorification of the heroic actor in his own drama, Rousseau still 'shines' unmistakably through his writing. The conclusion to the Lettres underpins this form of Rousseauvian narrative sleight-of-hand:

I demand that the gratitude of the men whom he enlightened, those whose happiness concerned him all his life, finally find an interpreter; that eloquence, as it is her turn to serve him, arm herself. What great man could scorn to maintain the glory of this great man? How beautiful to see in every age this league of genius against envy! where superior men who came to the defence of their predecessors, would provide a sublime example to their successors! the monument they had erected would one day serve as the pedestal to their own statue (p.104).

It is telling that, although de Staël invokes the assistance of an exclusive male band of the famous to puff their own kind, contemporary 'greatness' is inextricably and solely attached to their eloquence and will thus be perpetuated by an ability to enthrall an audience rather than the performance of exclusively masculine heroic feats to prove oneself worthy of membership. Supporting and encouraging the memorialization of the recently dead will noticeably provide only the pedestal to a statue of one's own commemoration. It is evident that if the statue is to be completed, it must be built by and through one's own endeavours in the battle to win accolades from one's contemporaries. By creating her own pedestal through the *éloge* to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and suggesting that she is the first to commemorate the most famous and influential man of the eighteenth century, the fame-hungry Germaine de Staël 'shines' through her first publication, only too ready and willing to carry on constructing her monument.

By 1800 and the publication of De l'Influence des Passions sur le Bonheur des Individus et des Nations (1796) and the groundbreakingly 'ingenious'<sup>9</sup> De la Littérature Considérée dans ses Rapports avec les Institutions Sociales (1800), de Staël had added a few of her own laurels to her statue, building upon and refining her theorization of '*la gloire*' and its fundamental relationship to society, culture, and literature. Both treatises contain extensive analyses of '*la gloire*' and, for the first but not the last time in the Staëlian *œuvre*, the potentials and negative aspects of female fame. By 1800, the fact that de Staël could write at length about the effects of celebrity on women, and thus effectively address an already existing audience, suggests that the cultural phenomenon of the feminization of fame was encouraging more and more women to contend for literary laurel wreaths and to experience the effects of renown.

The prominence of fame in the happiness of both the individual, the nation, and de Staël is signalled by the opening chapter title of De l'Influence des Passions: 'On the Love of Glory'. According to de Staël's first sentence, the desire for fame permeates every level of every society; the human heart only too 'susceptible' to the promise of a celebrated name resounding around one's cultural and social milieu (OC III, p.45). In a Rousseauvian analysis of the progress of civilization de Staël suggests that 'love of glory', although present even in primitive man, has peaked in recent times, reaching its 'true strength only in the midst of society' (p.45), an essentially metropolitan environment where the flourishing of culture and the impact of the power of print can be most beneficially experienced. And, of course, an atmosphere heady with the desire to exploit such advantageous resources through the promotion of oneself in and to the public. Although de Staël appears at first to distinguish between and hierarchize the ephemeral



and posthumous types of renown, claiming that 'true glory can never be acquired through relative celebrity', she suggests in the next sentence that it is only necessary to appeal to posterity if fame has not been gained through either 'genius and virtue'; both of which are able to 'hold onto' and thus take advantage of a name achieved from the praise of one's contemporaries (pp.45-46). The 'contract' between famous person and audience also adds to the sense of this treatise's advocacy of contemporary celebrity. Bargaining with the population, ensuring a continuous dialogue between both sides of the agreement instigates a situation whereby every action is mutually beneficial and can be enjoyed by all. For 'the fruits of [their] labours', the famous will ask of the audience a single favour in return: "I have need of you in order to obtain the reward necessary to unite the glory of my name with my actions". Unfortunately, as both Mary Robinson and now de Staël conclude, sometimes the nation refuses to fulfil its side of the bargain and the famous are forced to accept disproportionate honours, or even more tragically, obscurity (p.47).

De l'Influence des Passions does contain, however, one of the most explicit accounts of the seduction of celebrity for the famous. The physical thrill, the 'intoxicating pleasure [*une jouissance enivrante*]' of contemporary praise courses through the body of the text:

great events occur within you, demanding, in the name of the people, who count on your brilliance, the most lively attention to your own ideas. The cheers of the crowd stir the soul, by inspiring reflections and arousing commotion. [. . .] The paths which lead to this great end are filled with delights; the occupations imposed by the desire to succeed are pleasurable in themselves; and the happiest part of the career of success is often the sequence of events that precede it (pp.47-48).

Even, and especially, the achievement of glory through one's own endeavours, the toil and tribulation that accompanies those in search of the way to a famous name are exciting and enticing. The sense that such a great success has been fulfilled through the exertion

of one's own self forms noticeably the greatest pleasure here. Burdened with a famous name and two celebrated parents, it becomes clear that Germaine de Staël is eager to forge a career for herself, a separate entity who in no way will capitalize upon the renown and privilege of her original position, a woman who will carve her own name into literary culture with her own materials. De Staël is certainly eager to stress the difficulty of obtaining literary glory, the modern form of heroism in contradistinction to the judgments of the past, founded exclusively upon action and martial ability. There is a suggestion that the democratization, the feminization of fame has, in fact, contributed to an increasing difficulty and diversification, rather than a corresponding simplification of the trajectories to renown. The challenge has become far more exciting and the outcome less inevitable; the stakes have risen along with the unknown mass of potential audience. To obtain contemporary glory in literature entails numerous thrilling difficulties and success is assured for the few: 'contemporary glory is subject to [the people], because it is characterized by the enthusiasm of the multitude; genuine merit is independent of all, but even this can only obtain the name of glory from the level of noise made by the cheers of the crowd' (p.61). To be 'popular', to harness the opinion of an 'impartial' multitude ensures automatic success in modern European society.

Both De l'Influence des Passions and De la Littérature (1800) are concerned with the positive and negative political implications of the ability to sway public opinion. As the former text suggests: 'Admiration is a kind of fanaticism which can create miracles' (OC III, p.59). In a highly inventive mode, both texts develop Montesquieu's theory of the influence of climate on politics and morals in De l'Esprit des Lois (1748) into an analysis of the cultural and political climate most favourable to the development of literature, and,



unsurprisingly, the most advantageous atmosphere for the propitious growth of '*la gloire*'.<sup>10</sup> For de Staël, glory is inseparable from her political programme of happiness, virtue, and most importantly, given her own experience of living through the French Revolution of 1789 and the Terror-filled aftermath, unsullied liberty. In similar fashion to De l'Influence des Passions, De la Littérature opens with a 'Preliminary Discourse' assessing the importance and the impact of virtue, glory, liberty, and happiness upon literature and literature's effects upon these fundamental Staëlian 'passions': 'Liberty, virtue, glory, knowledge [:] this imposing procession of man in his natural dignity, these allied ideas with the same origin would not know how to exist alone. The fulfilment of each one is found in the combination of all' (OC IV, p.45). The achievement of a glorified reputation can only contribute to social and cultural benefit and literature's role is indispensable in promoting and contributing to the advantage of both: 'for glory cannot endure in a country where there is no public morality' (p.39).

With 'public morality' as a base to a well-regulated modern society, glory will 'raise itself upon' foundations which ensure that the audience will be able to esteem and respect those whom it praises. Without a reasonably educated multitude, with an ability to choose its heroes discerningly, reputation would occur by accident and thus not provide the famous person with the loyal followers necessary to convince him to continue to carry out his actions. Thus, the more learned an audience the more mutually beneficial the contract will be between the two parties. The contemporary cultural enlightenment ensures that no longer will military glory, the mainstay in 'primitive societies', provide the only outlet for the praise of the populace (p.42). An educated society will be influenced by and will influence literature: 'In Athens, in Rome, in all the major cities of the

civilized world, it was by speaking in the public square that one directed the will of the people and the fate of all; nowadays, it is through reading that events are prepared and judgments clarified' (p.41). And, of course, the revolution in print culture, '[t]he dissemination of ideas and knowledge' in Europe, coupled with the 'invention of printing', expands massively the potential audience (p.43). An uneducated, indecisive, *blasé* culture would not be able to express 'profound admiration' because 'literary and philosophical ideas [would] not make men capable of feeling and consecrating the glory of heroes' (p.44). Progressive, modernized, democratized societies simply possess the tools to bolster the fame system to their own advantage.

Liberalism, literary progress, and the active promotion of contemporary celebrity are considered indivisible in Staëlian political thought. In the section of De la Littérature devoted to literature and its relation to liberty, de Staël consolidates her theory: 'The progress of literature, that is to say, the perfection of the art of thinking and the art of expressing oneself are necessary for the establishment and preservation of liberty. It is evident that knowledge is all the more indispensable in a country where all its citizens have a direct share in government action' (p.46). The sheer power and range of the harnessing of public opinion, for the cause of liberty, through literature is inextricably bound to de Staël's conception of the free state. In a genuinely liberated society public authority must obtain the true opinions of its citizens in order to govern effectively and remain in possession of power. With '[r]eason and eloquence' forming the just and 'natural ties of a republican society', language can truly 'penetrate souls and inspire them with its messages' (p.48). It is a veritable republic of letters that de Staël envisages as the most perfect form of government, whereby the ruling body of the country is reliant upon



public opinion directed by 'distinguished writers' in order to avoid the possibilities of political power resulting in despotism. Only progressive literature can do battle with the old ways of thinking (p.49):

New institutions must form a new spirit in countries that people want to free. But how can this be based upon public opinion without the aid of distinguished writers? It is necessary to inspire desire rather than commanding obedience; and even though the government hopes quite rightly for the establishment of these institutions, they must handle public opinion carefully enough to make it appear as if agreeing with its every desire (p.48).

Via Rousseauvian reader ravishment, de Staël advocates the construction of a liberal politics through authorial sleight-of-hand effectively to keep both citizens and government assured they are fully in control of every situation.

## **ii. Women and Fame: The Fate of the 'Extraordinary Woman'**

Although de Staël appears to favour a feminized cultural system based fundamentally upon a feminization of literary fame, how does she envisage women's position in this possible state or indeed in any cultural climate? Both treatises contain numerous references to women, women writers especially, and their relationships with and attitudes towards fame. In De l'Influence des Passions female fame-seekers appear, most pessimistically, under the chapter entitled 'On the Love of Vanity' (OC III, pp.92-114). The importance of vanity as a 'passion' is defended by de Staël for its painful qualities and for its supreme appearance in the emotional instability of women. Bitterness characterizes this section of the treatise as de Staël seems uneasy with the way fame

treats women, but also, importantly, the way women themselves have treated fame. Condemned to play no part in the political system, woman is forced to reconcile herself to domesticity, placing her fate, quite literally, under the name of her male relatives or husband. The seeking of fame appears to be an alternative, an opportunity to make a name for herself upon her own terms, but the choice is stark. A stable home and a life of renown seem mutually exclusive, for '[w]ith every kind of personal ambition, women's happiness is the loser' (p.103). De Staël further claims that even if woman chooses the path of glory, she yearns too much for the path she has left behind. Not even glory 'gives her enough support' and 'nothing effaces the distinguishing characteristics of [her] nature' (p.104). The seemingly eternal incompatibility of women and fame adds a complex and complicated twist to the Staëlian cultural and political systems.

Without flattening out the differences and paradoxes in de Staël's fame theory, I want to suggest not only that she can see ways forward for women to promote themselves through the fame system but that there are reasons why women and fame often seem so intentionally polarised in the Staëlian *œuvre*. Highlighting the discordant passages in both de Staël's theory and fiction can point to an oblique, but sometimes extremely blatant undercurrent of the rejection of such 'dispiriting and hopeless' polarization so favoured by contemporary critical study.<sup>11</sup> Despite the doom-laden prognostications detailed above, even De l'Influence des Passions has glimmers of hope for the famous female. From the outset of this chapter on vanity it is abundantly clear that it is other women, seething with murderous rivalry and feelings of their own inadequacy, who cause the unhappiness of women of celebrity. For, claims de Staël, faced with a talented, ambitious woman, most other women are as viciously antagonistic towards her as they



would be towards another who was extremely beautiful or well-connected:

What sentiments of jealousy and hate are the great successes of a woman the object! what pains are caused by the innumerable ways envy has of persecuting her! The majority of women are against her, whether through rivalry, stupidity, or principle. Whatever a woman's talents may be, they always arouse anxiety in other women. Women deprived of intellectual distinctions can find a thousand ways to attack a woman who possesses them; a pretty creature who manages to thwart such distinction flatters herself that she is drawing attention to her own advantages. A woman who believes herself to be remarkable because of the prudence and moderation of her mind, and who, never having had two ideas in her head, wants to look as if she has rejected things she has never understood in the first place, can step out of her usual sterility to point out a thousand absurdities in a woman whose mind is giving life and variety to the conversation: and mothers of families, who believe with some justice that the triumphs of even genuine wit are not in accordance with women's destiny, take pleasure in watching attacks on those women who have obtained any such success (pp.105-106).

It is this combination of female 'anxiety' and envy which creates more problems for the famous woman than any other cause, any other form of oppression. This all-female plea for toleration is coupled with a more fiery, defensive streak, proudly asserting the confidence with which de Staël hints at her own superior intellect, toppling any objection that any type of woman could ever hope to raise and reflecting the criticism back upon the intolerant and ignorant accuser.

It is the male reaction, however, which seems to suggest the most promising situation for the woman of renown. Unlike the female response to the celebrated woman, men see a different image and treat her more favourably, both socially and politically. While de Staël laments the creation of a flattering illusion which might suggest that the famous female has achieved the instigation of passion in her male admirers, she is remarkably clear-sighted about their devotion: 'if the brilliance of a woman's celebrity attracts any

hommage in her wake, it is perhaps due to a feeling foreign to love - it resembles love' (p.105). Instead, the attraction is one far more important to the place of the renowned woman in society: 'it is a way of gaining access to the new power one wants to flatter. People approach a distinguished woman like a man in a position of power: the language is different, but the motive is the same' (p.105). Far from suffering debasement and criticism at the hands of her audience, this woman of distinction remarkably attracts the attention due to a powerful man with important political connections. While the audience may be self-serving, the woman is hardly unaware of the seductive enticements of her flatterers; her response and their devotion making up the perfect example of the fame contract in practice. It is the admired rather than the admirer who has the upper hand here. While the woman may break away at any time, secure in the knowledge that her audience will return, the men must compete for her attention, becoming more and more entranced by the hope that she will favour them with her notice: 'her admirers may mutually excite each other, intoxicated by the coincidence of tributes surrounding the woman they are concentrating on; but they are dependent on one another for this emotion' (p.105). The exclusively male audience are placed in a feminized position of weakness and dependence here, while the famous female remains in control of her own and her admirer's emotional responses.

Four years later, in De la Littérature, de Staël's attention is focused exclusively on a Montesquieuan analysis of 'Women Writers' and their position in various forms of political situation. The subject receives a chapter on its own, suggesting the importance not only de Staël but contemporary literary culture attaches to women writers. A dilemma opens the chapter: 'In many respects, the existence of women in society is still



uncertain. The desire to please excites their minds; reason advises obscurity' (OC IV, p.463). Already a battleground has appeared on the horizon of female progress, but this is a fight that de Staël seems to offer an outcome to within a few paragraphs: 'in general, it would undoubtedly be preferable if women were to dedicate themselves to the domestic virtues' (p.464). Victory to domesticity? Not quite. Rather than representing a fondly-held belief of de Staël herself, the structure of this suggestion more than hints at the views held by her antagonists. The universalization of the 'answer' and its conditional tense point to this as a prevailing opinion, not a fact or a correct solution to the female situation in society. In De l'Esprit des Lois (1748), Montesquieu drew attention to the subjection of women to the private household in the Roman Republic, where, in the absence of government inspection of female conduct, her mores were scrutinized in front of a domestic tribunal led by her husband.<sup>12</sup> Disillusioned by the change from monarchy to republic in France, which, far from fulfilling the promise of allowing women greater participation in political matters, had proved Montesquieu's theory, and instead encouraged an attitude of 'absurd mediocrity' towards them, de Staël aims to highlight the importance of celebrated women to the republican state (p.469). Reminding the reader of the original revolutionary impetus, this chapter supports encouragement and cultivation of female opinion, if only to ensure 'national morality and happiness' through women's abundant possession of the 'calming' features of 'humanity, generosity, delicacy' (p.469). De Staël does not only offer typically feminine characteristics as politically advantageous, but suggests coupling these with the equally prominent capacity of women to embody and express liberal sentiments: 'If we want the animating principle of the French republic to be the emulation of enlightenment and philosophy, it is only

reasonable to encourage women to cultivate their minds, so that men can discuss with them ideas that would captivate their interest' (p.468). The implication here is that women can more than hold their own in such situations.

Indeed, de Staël even offers to ease the Republic of a few burdens by cunningly placing the control of 'literature' exclusively in female hands while men devote themselves to 'higher philosophy' (p.467). Given her previous theorizing in this book and De l'Influence des Passions, this is a shrewd move, effectively placing women in control of public opinion via the political promotion of liberal principles through the medium of literature. Men, of course, are to dedicate themselves to the writing of deeply complex tracts which could never make a similar impact upon the educated but naturally not academic multitude. Furthermore, in an apparent regression to monarchical society and a move away from her Rousseauvian background, de Staël points to the importance of the *salonnière* in a republic. Anticipating reader dissension, de Staël acknowledges the dangerously excessive influence exerted by some of these women over public affairs during the *ancien régime*, but equates this threat with the similarly pernicious effect of an uneducated, unreasonable and unreasoning woman upon society (p.471). While the *salonnière* may have held sway under monarchical rule, de Staël is vehement that these women were and are fundamentally and undeniably committed to the enlightening principles of revolution and thus indispensable to the country: 'During the course of the Revolution, these are the same women who still gave the greatest possible proof of their devotion and energy' (p.471). Despite paradoxical comments about the unhappy status of the famous female under both forms of government, 'ridicule[d]' in a monarchical state and subject to 'hatred' in a republic, De la Littérature is as keen to promote the celebration



of the woman writer as to detail the injustices she is forced to face (p.465). While 'there are probably disadvantages to women's superiority', and most tellingly, 'to men's; to the vanity of clever people; to the ambition of heroes; to the imprudence of kind hearts, the irritability of independent minds, the recklessness of courage', 'natural gifts' and 'abilities' should be praised not humbled or censured (p.472). Repressing superior qualities can only harm, and who is to say that the unexceptional neglect their positions any the less?: 'It is hardly as if there were some guarantee that [. . .] degradation would promote familial or governmental authority. Women without the wit for conversation or writing are just that much more skilful at escaping their duties' (p.472). There is no social, political or cultural disadvantage to the publicity of the famous female, concludes de Staël. The only danger she faces, and perhaps will be unable to deal with, is from within.

This self-devouring threat is detailed most fully in Germaine de Staël's two fictions, the European bestsellers Delphine (1802) and Corinne ou l'Italie (1807). Both within these amazing tales of the talented woman and in the history of their reception and the treatment of their author, which ranged from the highest praise to Napoleon's literal exile of de Staël for the sentiments he feared in the earlier novel, the figure of the famous female and her attitude towards public opinion are fundamental concerns. So obsessed are these fictions by the position of women within a turbulent social situation that the Edinburgh Review response to the translation of Delphine seemed compelled to mock the eternally combative nature of the heroine:

Delphine is everywhere a great spirit struggling with shackles imposed upon her in common with the little world around her; and it is managed so, that her contempt of restriction shall always appear to flow from the extent, variety, and splendour of her talents. The vulgarity of this heroism ought, in some degree to diminish its value. Mr Colquhoun, in his police of the metropolis, reckons above

forty thousand heroines of this species, most of whom, we dare to say, have at one time or another reasoned like the sentimental Delphine about the judgments of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Not only does this analogy effectively render Delphine an unworthy criminal, ranting against a world that is only responding correctly to her misdemeanours, but the reviewer is unable to grasp the dangerous political content of such immoral, clichéd circulating library fodder that led to the exile of its author from Paris and eventually from France:

This dismal trash, which has nearly dislocated the jaw of every critic among us with gaping, has so alarmed Bonaparte, that he has seized the whole impression, sent Madame de Staël out of Paris, and, for ought we know, sleeps in a night cap of steel, and dagger proof blankets. To us it appears rather an attack upon the Ten Commandments, than the government of Bonaparte, and calculated not so much to enforce the rights of the Bourbons, as the benefits of adultery, murder, and a great number of other vices.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the facetious jocularities of the Edinburgh reviewer and his comments on the soporific rather than alarming qualities of the novel, he does realize the extent that de Staël's work terrified Napoleon and his government and how her role as a famous literary woman gave her an opportunity to carry out her political theory in practice.<sup>15</sup>

Delphine and Corinne consolidated de Staël's reputation and ensured her name became famous across the length and breadth of a continent. By 1808, even the previously hostile Edinburgh Review readily acknowledged its change of opinion towards de Staël's *œuvre*: 'Some of the writings of Madame de Staël have been censured, though perhaps without due consideration, as having an immoral tendency. This, we think, cannot, on any pretence be alleged of the work before us [Corinne]'.<sup>16</sup> I choose here to discuss these novels together in their representation of the famous female not only because Corinne has dominated critical discussion still to the almost total neglect of Delphine but also because both texts are examples of Staëlian politics in practice,



containing not only critique of the treatment of renowned women, but also providing effective manifestos for the conduct of the famous female. While de Staël's fiction (and this includes her novellas) often ends in the suicide of the celebrated heroine and thus seemingly suggesting the only happy ending for such a woman can be in death, there are further reminders of the desire for fame even in such a powerfully political act. Even in dying, these women are mindful of their reputation. As de Staël made clear in a defence of Delphine, 'Quelques réflexions sur le but moral de Delphine', which was published for the first time by her son in her posthumous complete works of 1820, both the state and the famous female have much to learn, both individually and from respect for each other:

[It is the] peculiar contrast in opinion that Delphine intends to highlight; it says to women: do not be too proud of your qualities, or your charms; for if you do not respect public opinion, it will crush you. It says to society: handle superior minds and souls more carefully; you have no idea of the evil and injustice you can effect when you stoop to hatred against this superiority, because you cannot submit everything to your laws; your punishments are vastly disproportionate to the mistake, you smash hearts, you overturn destinies that could have ornamented the world; you are a thousand times more guilty [. . .] than those you condemn (OC V, xiv).

It is only too noticeable, however, where de Staël's advice is most prominently admonitory and lengthy. The vindictive and often unnecessary cruelty of society towards the renowned female here seems to overturn precisely the suggestions given so succinctly to women and encourage the promotion of her intellectual abilities. While the words against female celebrity are voiced, it is evident where Staëlian sympathy lies.

Both Delphine and Corinne are women of independent means: Delphine a young, wealthy widow and Corinne, half-Italian, half-English, 'the most celebrated woman in Italy'.<sup>16</sup> Both are conspicuously attracted to a lifestyle of fame, although Delphine shines in pre-Revolutionary Parisian *salon* culture, Corinne has made a successful career of her

genius for writing, poetry and improvisation, regularly performing in public arenas, always pursued by crowds of admirers and laurel wreaths and, her first appearance in the novel occurs during the recreation of an ancient celebration whereby literary genius, Corinne herself in this instance, is crowned at the Capitol. In similar fashion to the Staëlian hero described in De l'Influence des Passions the two women delight in the physical thrill their abilities create in themselves and in their adoring audiences. After an appearance at a public festival, Corinne is overpowered by the result of her simply being there, as a visible presence, among her devoted admirers:

As she entered her box, Corinne was recognized immediately, and the memory of the Capitol adding to the interest she usually inspired, the hall resounded with applause at her arrival. On all sides people shouted *long live Corinne*, and the musicians themselves, electrified by the general emotion, mirrored the reaction by playing fanfares of victory; for triumph, of whatever kind always reminds men of war and battle. Corinne was deeply moved by this universal expression of admiration and benevolence. The music, the applause, the *bravos*, and the indefinable impression always produced by a great number of people expressing the same emotion, touched her profoundly (pp.246-47).

Although her name is known throughout Paris, Delphine's performances are on a smaller scale, but this in no way diminishes her equally powerful sense of public triumph: 'Never, never have I felt that I was even outdoing myself; I discovered in the music, in the poetry, charms and power as yet unknown to me: for the first time, the spell of the arts took possession of my being, and I felt an enthusiasm, an elevation of soul that was primarily caused by love, but was purer still than love' (OC V, p.158). Both Delphine and Corinne are not simply comfortable with their celebrity status: the electrifying effect of public admiration penetrates their very soul.

De Staël tests her heroines and the strength and security of their fame by causing



both to fall spectacularly in love, a process which forces them to question where their true desires lie. Confused and uncertain, both feel they are forced to choose one or the other.

As Corinne debates with her aristocratic English admirer Lord Oswald Nelvil:

'I need to know if there is anything other than you in the world which may fill my life; if what I used to enjoy cannot still please me, and if the feeling you inspire in me must absorb every other interest and every other idea'. 'Do you want to stop loving me then?' replied Oswald. 'No', answered Corinne; 'but it is only in domestic life where one can feel pleasure in being dominated by a single affection. I need my talents, my wit, my imagination in order to sustain the brilliance of the life I have adopted, and it does me harm, great harm, to love as I love you'. 'So you wouldn't sacrifice for me these tributes, this fame . . .'. 'What does it matter', said Corinne, 'to know if I would sacrifice them for you? It isn't necessary, since we are never destined for each other, do not destroy [*flétrir*] the kind of happiness which contents me' (p.145).

To follow Oswald to England, to give up her celebrated status to become Lady Nelvil terrifies and repulses Corinne. Forced to relinquish her independence and removed from the applause of her lifestyle, Corinne feels she would wither and die: '[she] had such a lively imagination that she wasted away [*se consumait elle-même*] when her faculties no longer obtained food from the outside' (p.470). Fame may consume Corinne, but in its absence her body, quite terrifyingly, begins to feed upon itself, desperately extracting the last drop of celebrity from her bones. Delphine's political liberalism on the eve of the Revolution of 1789, her 'singularly philosophical [. . .] principles and conduct' (p.139), conflicts most strongly with her lover Léonce's proud French / Spanish aristocratic heritage and his obsession with obeying every dictate of public opinion. Like the uneducated multitude in a primitive society Léonce is swayed perpetually by the prevailing attitude which he believes staunchly and unquestioningly can never be wrong. As Delphine writes after their first meeting to her deceased husband's sister Louise

d'Albémar: '[He's] witty, but very stubborn, obsessed [*fou*] with what he calls reputation or public opinion, and ready to sacrifice for even a shadow of this opinion the most important interests in life' (p.61). Delphine, on the contrary, will not be convinced by insubstantial prejudice: 'I am not so weak as to be afflicted by the disfavour of public opinion' (OC VI, p.264).

Léonce, however, after wrongly assuming Delphine is conducting an affair with man whom she is in fact helping to see another woman, responds by marrying Delphine's staid, fanatically religious cousin Matilde. Oswald too rejects Corinne for her equally staid, unexceptional, although beautiful, English half-sister Lucile. In the final analysis, neither man can marry a woman who would compromise their well-developed sense of the propriety of public opinion. Ironically, it is the men in both narratives who bow to the pressures of social norms and the women who independently defy the shackles that cripple their lovers. As Oswald informs Corinne: 'Your way of thinking makes you independent of public opinion. You live in a country where that opinion is never that strict, but even if it were, your genius makes you prevail over it' (p.400). Oswald's weakness certainly annoyed the Edinburgh reviewer: 'fear of impropriety might have been consulted, when the mutual attachment of Corinne and himself was in its commencement; but it was mere selfishness and want of feeling to be guided by such a fear, in opposition to the best sentiments of the heart, and one of the greatest and most imperious of all moral obligations'.<sup>18</sup> Critical victory to the celebrated Corinne. To the very end of Delphine, Léonce is beset with and enslaved by terrors, each bound up inextricably with reputation. As a soldier, a profession historically suited to posthumous glory, Léonce is only too aware that he must keep pace with the changing notions of



fame, and from the discrepancy between his antiquated notions and the reality of contemporary renown arises his public paranoia:

Valour excites enthusiasm in all women. It is unimaginable that a man can lack this quality, but it does not confirm his status if it is not coupled with an impressive character. Intrepid bravery will not suffice to obtain the degree of esteem and respect a proud heart needs; reputation as a whole consists of everyday circumstances which are not matters of life and death (OC VI, p.89).

Despite the commonly held maxim, quoted as the epitaph to Delphine and reiterated throughout the text, that '[it is] women who are permitted to tremble before public opinion, but it is men's role [. . .] to direct, or free [themselves] from it', it is women who face their public and control their publicity in both Delphine and Corinne (OC VII, pp.244-45).

Yet, rejected by their lovers, Delphine and Corinne pine away. The former commits suicide as Léonce is about to be shot by the firing squad of the Revolutionary army, while the latter heroine effectively wills her own death. And, in most critical accounts, this is the end of the story. Eternally unable to integrate their proud independence and public name with their essentially feminine need for love and protection, they can do nothing but die, their lives unfulfilled, their prospects blasted. A closer examination of the heroines' endings elicits some surprising contradictions to this theory. Corinne fights her love every step of the way and even at her most besotted moments with Oswald finds that fame remains her first and last desire, for '[h]er rare talents, the fame she had acquired, still meant too much to her' (p.475). Although her work appears to be affected by her lamentations, Corinne produces surprisingly coherent 'fragments' obsessed with her celebrity and the most frightening possibility for a contemporary writer: that she has not been able to experience enough of renown before she dies. Far from allowing glory to

relinquish her, Corinne is still powerfully affected by it, the 'striving for fame which had gripped her in the past' is 'revived', but death has taken its hold and now she will 'die without people knowing anything about her, even though she is famous' (p.516; p.521). Even this knowledge does not discourage Corinne from a solution to her dilemma, to her desire to live, paradoxically to experience the thrill of contemporary celebrity while dead. To achieve the impossible she enlists her child double, Juliette, the daughter of Oswald and Lucile, to read her words, which are eternally 'imprinted' with her very soul (p.583). Juliette becomes a reincarnation of Corinne even before she dies, a living 'legacy' bequeathed to her beloved public (p.575). In dying of love, Corinne effectively lives for fame.

Delphine's suicide was the second ending to the novel which had originally concluded with the heroine's death from a broken heart after Léonce's assassination. Both her suicide and the build-up to Léonce's punishment make important statements about the position of woman in the time of political uncertainty after revolutionary upheaval. While Léonce crumbles at the prospect of imprisonment and death, ranting at his inability to 'locate' or 'gag' the 'hellish power', Delphine rallies and fights his cause with reasoned eloquence, taking advantage of and mastering public opinion for her speechless lover's benefit. Addressing the president of Léonce's tribunal, Delphine appeals not only to the judge through a manipulation of his domestic ties, assuring him that his sick son will live if he releases Léonce, but mounts a shrewd political defence of her lover through a speech based on revolutionary principles:

The unfortunate man we can save from an unjust and uncertain death should be dear to us! I admit that what I ask of you demands courage, generosity, sacrifice; it is not only pity that I ask of you, it is a nobility of soul that presupposes the virtues of antiquity, republican



virtues, virtues that honour the party you defend a thousand times more than the most illustrious victories (OC VII, p.326).

Overpowered by Delphine's 'eloquence', her 'supernatural sensibility' the judge lifts the death sentence hanging over Léonce's head (p.326). Triumph is short-lived, however, as the Parisian prosecutor overturns the decision without appeal and Léonce is led away to execution. Again, it is Delphine who provides the strength, whose ability to face the public exceeds the tremblings of the condemned Léonce. Although informed that she could not possibly stand the trial of accompanying her lover to his death, Delphine stubbornly resists all attempts to remove her from his side. Even Léonce is incredulous at her ability to brave the insults fired at them from the baying populace: "Ah!", he cried, "can I accept such a generous effort?" "You must", interrupted Delphine' (p.344), as she instructs him to 'scorn' the 'miserable insults' flung at him by the crowd. The effects of the poison reach Delphine just before Léonce dies. Her death is as public and as politically engaged as her life, her braving of public opinion consistent to the very end.

### **iii. Conquering England**

The skilful ability of the Staëlian heroine to control publicity provides an answer to Napoleon Bonaparte's excessive response to the writings of Germaine de Staël.<sup>19</sup> In the process of re-creating France as an Empire, with himself in the position of supreme authority, and attempting to subject the rest of Europe to his will, he took fright at a woman writer whose authorial presence was so powerful, whose audience was so loyal.

She also had connections with England, the hated enemy whose capture eluded him. And, most irritatingly, she refused to turn her own influential writings into propaganda for the Napoleonic government; instead actively addressing Delphine to a France forcibly 'silence[d]': measures enacted through press censorship and literary manipulation (OC V, Preface, xlix). I suggest that Napoleon saw de Staël as active, threatening competition, both politically and in the race to become the most popular and famous person, not only in France, but across the European continent. As de Staël hints knowingly in the travelogue she wrote while fleeing Napoleonic oppression, Dix Années d'Exil, only one of them would conquer the hearts and minds of the desirable continental poles Russia and England. Only one of them would have all of London at her feet.

De Staël's writings during the Napoleonic era are concerned both with his persecution of her and other literary figures and the intimately related means of this repression. For, as de Staël realized, Napoleon could not have achieved so much power in any other era. While his military victories created national pride, he was only too aware, in a similar fashion to Léonce in Delphine, that this was not enough to maintain the support of a fickle populace whom he needed artfully to persuade to back his cause. As de Staël detailed in her posthumously published Dix Années d'Exil (1820) and Considérations sur la Révolution Française (1818), Napoleon was an arch-manipulator of the media, although his methods were less subtle than Rousseauvian reader ravishment. Creating and re-creating his image through newspapers and periodicals, which he effectively ruled over with the iron hand of censorship, Napoleon supported his military glory with the means to influence as many as possible across France but also the European continent of his outstanding success, instigating 'a cult based upon himself'.<sup>20</sup> Coming to power at a



time propitious to a strong leader, a time when there was a need for 'a name' to rule a floundering France, 'Napoleon' is soon on 'every tongue'.<sup>21</sup> Dix Années points to the ease with which Napoleon ensured that it remained there:

Nothing annoyed him so much as freedom of the press. Since tyranny is in fact established even more by guile than by force, publicity has to be the greatest fear of a despotic usurper. My father often told me that a free newspaper published in France would do Bonaparte more harm than an army of a hundred thousand men. [. . . But] he does like to make use of an enslaved press. He gets newspapers to speak in a thousand different ways. He knows the importance of public opinion and acts on it tirelessly and without pause, an example that ought to be followed elsewhere. It is also true that words are no more contagious than in France. In this country, the riffraff of the salons delights in repeating sentences read in newspapers and embroidering a given story. [. . .] He did all that can be done when men cannot be stirred either by truth, or religion, or patriotism; that is, he used all possible means to commit them to the interests of one man in the hope that each would share in their leader's winnings (p.65; p.68).

Not only France succumbed to his celebrated image. He momentarily 'mystifi[ed]' Europe itself; even England, de Staël's template of a deservedly proud, eminent nation, 'was not entirely free of a curiosity bordering on homage about the First Consul as a person' (CRF, p.353; DA, p.60). For de Staël, Napoleon was not a 'man, but a system': a media system (CRF, p.353). Employing a 'ruse peculiar to the times', the 'art of proclaiming a factitious opinion through newspapers which use such grandiloquent language to express what they are ordered to say that they seem to be free' crushes rather than enlightens public opinion. Controlled centrally but with the 'ruse' reassuring doubters that the share in the government of France is equally distributed, Bonaparte not only ruled through media representation, but also warps the liberal revolutionary principles he claimed to support (DA, p.86; p.77).

A ruler so dependent upon the media can also be destroyed by publicity, as both de

Staël and Napoleon himself realized only too frequently. Hence Napoleon's obsession with gagging and censoring: Staëlian liberal theory, detailed in her earlier treatises, could be harnessed for precisely the opposite end. In her lengthy analysis of French history from the Revolution to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and beyond, Considérations sur la Révolution Française, de Staël details Napoleon's suppression of literature. Without the allowance of 'food for thought' and for freedom of expression, literary output 'fell to a low point' under Bonaparte (p.417). While originality withers and dies, 'literature' about a new hero, Napoleon, fills the bookshelves of every print shop and library. So 'faithful to the spirit of servitude' that an outsider would believe the French were 'living under a bower of flowers', these works concern themselves with such matters of national importance as 'the daily walks of the emperor, and those of the princes and princesses, court etiquette and court presentations' (p.418). But there were still those willing to react against tyranny and speak for the silenced country, to represent to the world the true state of affairs within Napoleonic France, and Germaine de Staël was one of them. Bonaparte knew this and derived great pain from de Staël's ability to provoke public support as easily, or even more easily than he was able. De Staël was a threat and one that had to be expelled if she was not to cause Napoleon fears about the possibilities of literary usurpation from a female far too famous for his own taste.

By exiling de Staël, Napoleon achieved the exact opposite of what he had planned. She not only became more famous because of her rootless status, but crossed Europe on an effective publicity tour with England as her ultimate goal. Dix Années d'Exil details her journey as far as Russia, but begins with an often amusing catalogue of Napoleon's paranoia about her writing and even her presence in Paris itself as possible instigators of



opposition, not only to his government but to his own celebrity. De Staël creates an image of herself in this work which, as in other of her writings about women, is often paradoxical. She is both 'defenceless and persecuted', misrepresented as 'a woman with an all-powerful mind, [. . .] an irresistible person' and a woman who 'jot[s] down various proud and biting replies [. . .] prepared in advance to face [Napoleon] bravely' and a woman whose goal is to escape oppression by trekking bravely across a continent to her English 'goal' (p.30; p.31; p.43; p.120). The latter sense of de Staël's powerful presence and presence of mind, however, is the pre-eminent impression conveyed to the reader by the text. From their first meeting Napoleon caught a glimpse of something not quite safe in Germaine de Staël, a woman whose 'success' and popularity frighten and perplex (p.34). His reasons for fearing even women are mocked by de Staël: 'Dare I say that he disliked hearing people repeat that Mme Récamier was the most beautiful in Paris and that I was the most practiced at conversation? He wants no one of the first rank, man nor even woman, in any domain' (p.46). Threatened even by the beautiful face of *salonnière* Juliette Récamier, something he could never be celebrated for, Napoleon appears to fret when public attention is removed from his own person. In true Staëlian fashion he wants to create a pedestal to a statue of himself, but as de Staël illustrates, not even his base for fame is due to his own endeavours: 'Far from wanting to spare what was distinguished in any domain, he wanted to make a pedestal for his statue out of all those who rose in the world, either by trampling them underfoot or by making them serve his ends' (p.69). Desiring the 'anonymity' of everyone except himself, to ensure the dissemination of only his name across contemporary society and the highlighting of nothing 'but the letters that make up his name', Napoleon, argues de Staël, 'seize[s] a great deal of fame for himself'

by 'keeping everyone else on earth from acquiring any' (p.46; p.16).

De Staël progresses even further in her analysis by suggesting that because Napoleon's fame is achieved through foul means, it is not the purity of true celebrity he desires, but simply oppressive and repressive 'power' (p.49): 'In allowing this mendacious flattery, Bonaparte had not even the merit of loving glory. It is power that he wants, and in the light of this system that prefers servile praise to genuine praise, because the first shows that he is the master, and the second would give proof of independence in those who paid him homage' (p.34). The kind of genuine fame, earned through one's own toil and endeavour to succeed, impressing and deserving adulation from one's own contemporaries, cannot be achieved by a man whose every act has been accompanied by praise extorted from a frightened, censored audience. Napoleon's treatment of de Staël, whom he was aware had and still was able to achieve contemporary celebrity, seemed based upon this knowledge of her own potential to reveal his status as a sham: 'The existence of a woman people visit for her wit and literary reputation is nothing much, but this nothing much did not depend upon him, and that was sufficient for his wanting to crush it' (p.58). Exiled from Paris, de Staël retreated to her family home, Coppet, where she remained under strict observation. Napoleon was only too eager to win over such an influential writer, however, as an imperial propagandist:

[M. de Capelle - a prefect from Paris] told me immediately that a talent like mine was meant to celebrate the Emperor, that he was a subject worthy of the enthusiasm I had shown in *Corinne*. I answered that, persecuted as I was by the Emperor, any praise addressed to him on my part would seem like a petition, and that I was persuaded the Emperor himself would find my encomiums ridiculous in such circumstances. He fought this opinion vigorously; he came to my home several times to beg me, in the name of my own interests, to write for the Emperor, were it only a handwritten pamphlet of four pages; these would suffice, he assured me, to put



an end to all my difficulties (p.105).

Refusing to compromise her political principles and become a government puppet, bringing her own fame to the collection of celebrity already amassed by Napoleon, de Staël preserves her own independence and renowned name.

The belief that 'the roads were covered with people coming to visit' de Staël and her every walk outdoors could ensure an accompanying train of townspeople, a circumstance which led to the suggestion that she is 'surrounded by a court', finally provoked Bonaparte to further action and de Staël to escape (p.69; p.98). De Staël had already been warned by government officials that Napoleon was afraid that de Staël was winning in the popularity stakes: "'if the Emperor saw that people prefer you to him, he would hold it against you'" (p.115). Stifled and unable to write after the Napoleonic pulping of her latest treatise De l'Allemagne in 1810 which effectively expelled her from France, de Staël attempted to escape and retreat to England, where the freedom of the press would allow her to publish her work without censorship (CRF, p.536). Travel was exceptionally dangerous, the continent subjected to Napoleonic rule and thus 'a great snare in which one cannot take a step without being arrested. So many constraints, so many obstacles to the slightest movement!' (p.129). Re-conquering the continent, in the name of liberty and escape from oppression, de Staël wass fêted everywhere she goes, re-crossing areas already subdued by the Emperor. Except for one. De Staël not only managed to reach Russia before the French army, but, unlike them, penetrated to its capital city and major towns. Her celebrity preceded her and she was welcomed even in the bleak provinces: 'Several gentlemen of the surrounding area came to my inn to compliment me on my writings, and I confess I was flattered to find I had a literary reputation so far from my

native land' (p.146). Napoleon's suppression of de Staël and her writings had the opposite effect that he had intended and effectively doubled her fame. The other pole in the European equation, England, was all too ready to receive a woman celebrated for her stance against the old enemy.<sup>22</sup>

While Germaine de Staël admired the English state, based, as she believed, on the liberality of their constitution, she became less sure about the position of women in this state as her career progressed. Corinne contains numerous anecdotes about the seclusion and silence of women in England, employing the virtuous but essentially dull Lucile as its model of English womanhood, a stifling character that forces her half-sister to embrace the opportunities for celebrity offered by Italy and the public praise of its heroes and heroines. In Considérations sur la Révolution Française, the sixth part is devoted exclusively to a discussion of English liberty and whether France could ever achieve, in de Staël's eyes, such an ideal political situation. The approach to the coast of England excited numerous possibilities in a mind hurt but not defeated by Napoleonic rule: 'I was persecuted by an enemy of liberty; so I believed myself sure of honourable pity, in a country whose every institution was in harmony with my political feelings, [. . .] and I was not deceived' (p.523). The principle of free speech was the most obvious attraction for de Staël after the literary censorship of France, a situation which occurred paradoxically and in spite of the rather reserved English nature: 'Publicity in all business is a principle so generally accepted that, even though the English are by nature the most reserved of men, who betray the most reluctance to speak in society, there are almost always, in rooms where committees gather, seats for spectators, and a platform where the speaker can address the audience' (p.528). In similar fashion to the way in which Corinne



receives all her information, while in England, from the newspapers, de Staël admires the extent of public enlightenment through the well-developed media system: 'Juries, the administration of counties and towns, elections, newspapers, provide the whole nation with a great concern in public affairs. It thus follows that the nation is better informed, and it would be more profitable to discuss political issues with an English farmer, than with the majority of most men, even the most enlightened, on the continent' (p.546). Yet, while offering numerous opportunities for the promotion of celebrity and public exposure for men, de Staël still expresses concern for the fate of womankind in this liberal monarchy.

While women make up the majority at social gatherings, they are certainly not encouraged to lead or direct the conversation, and, as a consequence, have developed an 'extreme timidity' in public (p.556). Even the famed woman writer, de Staël believes, is sheltered from publicity, living in retired seclusion from the bustling world: 'There are several remarkable women writers: Miss Edgeworth, Madame d'Arblay, formerly Miss Burney, Hannah Moore [*sic*], Mrs Inchbald, Mrs Opie, Miss Bayley [*sic*] who are admired in England, and read avidly in France; but in general they live very retired lives' (p.563). The exclusivity of French social dialogue cannot occur in England where women have acquaintances to visit numbering 'sometimes about 12 000' (p.555). Despite the exaggeration here, de Staël offers paradoxically an outlet for female discussion which would by far increase social exposure for English women above that of the French. The Edinburgh reviewer of Corinne protested at de Staël's treatment of English women, reassuring her that female conversation is more 'intellectual, more connected with general principles, and more allied to philosophical speculation' than the discussions of certain

men who can only speak at length about 'hunting, horse-racing, or [. . .] methods of training'.<sup>23</sup> As de Staël herself would learn, this is precisely the immense cultural circulation that provided a ready audience for a celebrated woman. A letter from Albertine to Auguste de Staël expresses succinctly this astonishment at the publicity expected of their famous mother: '[she] has been accepted as a wonder. Everyone comes to see her. She has been invited everywhere'.<sup>24</sup> When she reached London and combined her awareness of English publicity with the social circulation of women, de Staël was forced to realize that a name can be just as easily achieved for the canny famous female in England.

The name of Germaine de Staël and the work she would re-launch in London pervaded the English newspapers and periodicals months before De l'Allemagne was published in November 1813. Some even followed her progress across the continent, including the radical metropolitan weekly Drakard's Paper, run by John Scott, which would soon become the Champion, and contain contributions from the likes of William Hazlitt. On 13th June 1813 the paper announced that 'Madame de Staël has left Stockholm and is now on her way to England with her celebrated work on Germany'. Two weeks later, the reader is informed that 'Madame de Staël, we understand, is arrived in London, from Sweden. She will be an object of much interest in the literary circles'. The article also hints at the Edinburgh Review's cleverly placed puff for the writer and her work in a favourable and lengthy review of De la Littérature, shrewdly republished in London, thirteen years after its first appearance in France, conveniently in time for de Staël's arrival: 'Its elaborate article [. . .] is calculated, and was perhaps intended, to give much éclat to her appearance amongst us'.<sup>25</sup> The Edinburgh indeed set the stage for the



welcome of such a celebrated figure of European literature in its reviews of De la Littérature in February and of Réflexions sur le Suicide in July 1813. Although clearly dated in its ideas, having been written in a time of flux before the advent of Napoleonic rule, the reviewer (the important editor of the periodical, Francis Jeffrey) devotes a fifty-page analysis to the treatise; a review over twenty pages longer than any other article that month. A situation Jeffrey himself takes responsibility for, by expressing his 'apologies' to the reader for his excessive enthusiasms:

we are persuaded that the fault be imputed to us, and not to the ingenious author upon whose work we have been employed; and that, if we had confined ourselves to a mere abstract of her lucubrations, or interspersed fewer of our own remarks with the account we have attempted to give of their substance, we might have extended this article to a still greater length, without provoking the impatience even of the more fastidious of our readers. As it is, we feel that we have done but scanty justice, either to our author or her subject - though we can now make no other amends, than by earnestly entreating our readers to study both of them for themselves.

Jeffrey's review is not simply notable for its incredible length. His amazing promotion of de Staël's work is apparent from the outset and never tires throughout the whole of the article. The comments are frequently superlative: de Staël is 'beyond comparison the 'first female writer of her age', the 'most eminent literary female'. Yet de Staël is not only pre-eminent among women: she is a 'distinguished person', who more than 'any writer [has] made such bold and vigorous attempts to carry the generalizing spirit of true philosophy into the history of literature and manners'.<sup>26</sup> De Staël, suggests Jeffrey, to one of the most widely-distributed and impressively large middle-class journal audiences, deserves all the accolades, and more, due to a famous person.<sup>27</sup> As Maria Edgeworth recorded with ironic understatement in a letter to Sophy Ruxton in May 1813: 'The Edinburgh Review of her last work has well prepared all the world for her arrival'.<sup>28</sup>

Advance references to the publication of De l'Allemagne, a coup for the London literary world, peppered the papers and periodicals, of all political outlooks, almost simultaneously with her arrival. Magazines as polar as the Gentleman's Magazine and Leigh Hunt's Examiner contain advance pre-publication notice of De l'Allemagne in July issues: four months before the actual book launch. The puffs are almost identical and one must have been lifted from the other. Either way, expectation is clearly high for a glimpse of a text surrounded in such political controversy:

Madame DE STAEL'S work, the mysterious suppression of which has so long excited the curiosity of Europe, will shortly be published in this country, and is entitled, simply, 'De L'Allemagne', and consists of the result of Madame DE STAEL'S observations on the *manners*, the *society*, the *literature*, and the *philosophy* of the Germans. An edition, consisting of 10,000 copies, was actually printed at Paris in the year 1810, and although in its course through the press it was submitted to the Literary Police, the whole impression was suddenly destroyed in consequence of the immediate mandate of BONAPARTE. One copy, however, escaped, and from that the present edition is printing. It will contain, it is said, all the passages originally struck out by the censors of the press, and a copious new preface, developing the causes of this curious and unprecedented literary persecution.<sup>29</sup>

The Gentleman's also adds notice of the further publication of other of de Staël's works, De l'Influence des Passions and a translation of Réflexions sur le Suicide; the English press clearly capitalizing upon their fortuitous position. Ingenious advertising strategies and a carefully worded document, at times verging upon the theatrical (only one copy dramatically escaped the all-consuming flames, and that single, surviving text will be published here in London), set up a story that will become well-known, but which still retains several enigmatic mysteries for the reader to fathom upon publication. Up until the release of the manuscript in its published form, articles on de Staël take obvious advantage of the exciting history of the book and its persecuted author, unjustly pursued across the length and breadth of a continent. The book and the presence of its author in



England are, of course, represented as political coups. Not only have the English effectively poached the most celebrated contemporary writer from the enemy France, but in doing so, are stealing even more glory, and affording de Staël the triumphal proceeds: further fame.

For de Staël was treated as a legitimate political figure when she visited the country in 1813-1814. Not only did she meet the great writers of the day such as Byron and Rogers, Burney and Edgeworth, and the most famous socialites such as Beau Brummell, but she met and discussed political issues with both government and opposition.<sup>30</sup> In December 1813, the Examiner compounded her important status by describing de Staël's visit to Oxford University 'where great respect was paid to this distinguished literary character. She was present in the schools at some of the most interesting examinations'.<sup>31</sup> Germaine de Staël was by no means simply an ordinary visitor to England. But there were detractors. Although Maria Edgeworth was an admirer of the Staëlian *œuvre*, she was jealous of the fame that de Staël snatched from her that year as England's most fêted female. Throughout her letters of the time and for years afterwards she was keen to point out what she considered de Staël's effective meddling in political issues that should not concern her. In 1818, she related such an anecdote to her stepmother. De Staël, staying with Lord and Lady Landsdowne, was present when news expected from Lord Wellington arrived in a 'red despatch box' for Lord Bathurst: 'All the company retreated of course to leave the minister to look at his papers. Lord Bathurst retired to a recessed window. Madame de Staël followed him. *'De quoi s'agit-il Milord?'* His Lordship was surprised and shocked almost beyond the power of diplomatic answer and complained indignantly afterwards of this want of good breeding'.<sup>32</sup> When visiting Coppet years

later, even Edgeworth's rivalry was cooled at the excitement felt in de Staël's home and the opportunity to sit in de Staël's own chair proved irresistible: 'Here *genius was!* Here *was* Ambition! Love! All the struggles of the fury passions! Here *was* Madame de Staël!'.<sup>33</sup> The review of Réflexions sur le Suicide in the Edinburgh reflects not only the reasons for the jealousy that must have been felt by Edgeworth when faced with the publicity about de Staël, but also her importance, conveyed in 1820 by her rival's succinct but telling exclamation of 'Here *was* Madame de Staël!' Her importance could not be overstated, both as a political representative and as the embodiment of the ultimate figure of celebrated womanhood: 'This almost solitary example of an independence not to be intimidated by power, nor subdued by renown, has very strikingly displayed the inferiority of Napoleon's character to his genius'.<sup>34</sup> More than any army, more than any glorious military engagement, de Staël's fundamental representation of mastery of the feminization of fame defeated Napoleon and boosted the cause of liberty.

When De l'Allemagne was finally published on 4th November 1813, it sold rapidly and was, unsurprisingly, reviewed well and again at length, although critically. Almost too unbelievably fortunate was the news reported on the same day detailing the allied victory at Leipzig, which ensured that German liberation would rapidly follow suit. This further contributed to the feeling of the English having accomplished not only a publishing coup against the French Emperor. De l'Allemagne itself praised significantly the receptivity of Germanic, North European literary cultures to Romantic modernity, with its valuation of individuality over imitation, character over event, integration over exclusivity: an Edenic climate for the promotion of a feminized fame. Critical attention concentrated on the parts suppressed by the Napoleonic censorship machine and



numerous debates appeared in print over whether or not de Staël was too uncritical of or too biased towards Germanic culture. The Quarterly Review hints at the undeniable political success of the treatise which appeared 'sufficiently gratifying' to the English nation; Bonaparte's oppression leading to the fortuitous 'circumstances [by which]- we owe the present residence of this lady in England, and the publication of her persecuted work by a London bookseller'.<sup>35</sup> The most intriguing feature of the publication of De l'Allemagne, coupled with the presence of the author at the launch in London, and the reissuing of many of her other works, is the quite surprising number of literary and journalistic responses to the Staëlian *œuvre* and, especially, Staëlian fame theory. Some of the most intense replies come from William Hazlitt, who continued to engage with de Staël's work directly and obliquely in many articles for newspapers and periodicals, both during her stay in England and after. De l'Allemagne's publication allows Hazlitt not only to profit from another review, but also benefits his own productivity. Unable as yet to find a publisher for the lectures he had given on metaphysics in 1812, de Staël's work provided the ideal opportunity. As a consequence, after a general review of the work for the Morning Chronicle in November 1813, Hazlitt proceeds to publish four more essays between February and April 1814 in the same paper. Although entitled 'Madame de Staël's Account of German Philosophy', Hazlitt leaves the original text far behind, instead publishing his own work, with only cursory glances at the original text, covering the works of Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, Helvétius and others. As Hazlitt's biographer Stanley Jones notes, the complex philosophical debates must have presented the readers of the paper with quite a surprise: 'they stood out from the rest of the matter, war correspondence, political reports, London and provincial news, with an abstruseness that

must have made many a reader stare. Only Madame de Staël's popularity can explain Perry's acceptance of these eight closely printed columns'.<sup>36</sup>

This is in no way to denigrate Hazlitt's writing. As a journalist he took advantage of every opportunity that came his way, and, most importantly, his canny move provides a neat illustration of the cultural climate in early nineteenth-century literature. The world of publishing was continuing to expand, newspapers and periodicals held sway over literary taste, and publicity and fame could be achieved from a single article. This was a fact of journalistic life and one that Hazlitt was only too aware. As he illustrates in an essay on 'The Periodical Press' for the Edinburgh Review ten years after de Staël's visit to London: 'If we are superficial, let us be brilliant. If we cannot be profound, let us at least be popular' (CW XVI, p.218). In 1816, after de Staël's continuing popularity had prompted the re-release of Lettres sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau two years earlier, Hazlitt is ready and waiting to respond. If the original text is concerned with the achievement of a celebrated name, Hazlitt too writes about renown, despite his disagreements with parts of de Staël's argument. Suggesting that de Staël's claim that Rousseau lived only in his imagination, from which he consequently derived his theories, is 'radically wrong', Hazlitt claims that it was his 'extreme sensibility', his profound egotism which actuated his desire for fame (CW IV, p.88). Paradoxically, both critics are effectively suggesting the same thing via different methods: that Rousseau knew exactly how to control an audience:

His interest in his own thoughts and feelings was always wound up to the highest pitch; and hence the enthusiasm which he excited in others. He owed the power which he exercised over the opinions of all Europe, by which he created numberless disciples, and overturned established systems, to the tyranny which his feelings, in the first instance, exercised over himself. The dazzling blaze of



his reputation was kindled by the same fire that fed upon his vitals  
(p.89).

In spite of their differences both writers recognize, through the figure of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the need to take advantage of the moment, to employ their talents to win the applause of their peers, and achieve a contemporary celebrity through the different forms of publicity available to them.

## Afterword

Contained within the pages of De l'Allemagne, the book that set a whole continent ablaze with the tale of its suppression, is a brief sentence that draws attention to one of the major concerns of women writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the relationship between women and fame: 'the desire for success is insurmountable in men, but even more so in women'.<sup>1</sup> With Germaine de Staël's phenomenally successful career came an indication of just how far fame had become a feminized concept. When Thomas Carlyle wrote an essay in Fraser's Magazine on 'Schiller, Goethe and Madame de Staël' (1832) and included translations of extracts from letters between the German writers about the 'most distinguished female' of the time, he illustrated the project of de Staël's De l'Allemagne with a telling metaphor. Engaged in an attempt to theorize cultural and political institutions, de Staël completed a 'true tour of knight-errantry [. . .] - the only knight-errantry practicable in these times'.<sup>2</sup> Not only did de Staël embody a formerly exclusive masculine military form of achieving renown for oneself, but she did so by obeying and engaging critically with the spirit of the age: searching for one's own celebrity through seeking out the opinions of one's contemporaries.

For de Staël's younger contemporary and friend Lord Byron, as for other male writers of the early nineteenth century, the new feminized and feminizing forms of fame were often difficult to negotiate. Byron embodied the struggle between a more ancient masculine desire for posthumous renown and the new, more instantaneous contemporary celebrity. Enormously popular after the publication of Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage in 1812, Byron faced a situation whereby not only were his writings consumed by a largely female audience, who would be the ultimate arbiters



of his reputation, but also his most prominent and prolific competitors in the republic of fame were women writers. As he noted after the publication of Childe Harolde, 'fame' was to 'divide purchasers with Hannah Glasse [a writer on housewifery] and Hannah More'.<sup>3</sup> Yet Byron also mocked posthumous renown, sought after by his male poet contemporaries as a reactionary refuge from the feminizing effects of contemporary celebrity. The Dedication to Don Juan, addressed to Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, examined precisely this issue:

For me who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,  
 Contend not with you on the winged steed,  
 I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,  
 The fame you envy, and the skill you need;  
 And recollect a poet nothing loses  
 In giving to his brother their full meed  
 Of merit, and complaint of present days  
 Is not the *certain* path to future praise.

He that reserves his laurels for posterity  
 (Who does not often claim the bright reversion?)  
 Has generally no great crop to spare it, he  
 Being only injured by his own assertion;  
 And although here and there some glorious rarity  
 Arise, like Titan from the sea's immersion,  
 The major art of some appellants go  
 To – God knows where - for no one else can know.<sup>4</sup>

With the feminization of fame came the prospect of a gamble for Byron and his contemporaries, a difficult line to negotiate between achieving a more transitory, but definite celebrity or taking a chance on an unknown future audience to value one's writing. Either way, fame had become earth-bound, reliant upon reading publics of the day or of the future to support the celebrity in the promotion of public image. The search for the heroic unresolved, Byron's dilemmas would preoccupy any writer from now on in the quest for fame. The heavenly Temple of Fame was a crumbling edifice, Fame herself rarely pictured in art: now, fame was embodied within the self.<sup>5</sup>

As the promoter of Germaine de Staël and a feminized concept of fame and as a representative of the next generation looking back upon the past century, Thomas Carlyle would claim in On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History (1841) that: 'the hero of old has had to cramp himself into strange shapes: the world knows not well at any time what to do with him, so foreign is his aspect in the world!'.<sup>6</sup> The new hero, represented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'a product of these new ages', the growth of the celebrity through the expansion of print culture providing the Victorians with the writer as '[their] most important modern person' (p.155) and literature as the new democratic 'Parliament' (p.164), the new religion: 'writers of Newspapers, Pamphlets, Poems, Books, these *are* the real working effective Church of a modern country' (p.162). The 'Fourth Estate' (p.164) and its famous leaders in the new republic of fame represented for the Victorians a veritable cultural and political body to rival more traditional establishments.

For the writers in this study, fame was complex but essentially rewarding, providing, as Germaine de Staël put it in De l'Allemagne, 'more pleasure than pain'.<sup>7</sup> As the new preface to the edition of Lettres sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau, published in England in 1814, confirmed:

There was once a Parisian who ducked every time he passed under the Saint-Denis gateway, even though it was one hundred feet high; it is the same for women who brag about their fear of celebrity, without ever having had the necessary talent to achieve it. Undoubtedly, talents have their drawbacks, like so many other fine things in life; but I prefer these drawbacks to the boredom of a restricted mind, which denegrates what it cannot achieve or feigns what it cannot feel.<sup>8</sup>

It is this pleasurable feeling from the brilliance of contemporary celebrity, the sheer enjoyment of the seductive praise and triumph, that thrilled these authors to literary and public self-exertion, ultimately to achieve in a lifetime what their predecessors struggled only to obtain as a lifetime achievement.



## Notes to Introduction

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Confessions, in Œuvres Complètes I (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p.1151. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.
2. There are currently only two academic studies of the history of fame. Leo Braudy's The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York: Vintage, 1986/1997) is a vast analysis of fame from Alexander to the late twentieth century. Women are almost entirely absent from Braudy's account and when they appear, do so as footnotes. This is something that Braudy himself fully acknowledges in his Conclusion.  
 Concentrating specifically upon the eighteenth century, Frank Donoghue's The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996) suggests wholeheartedly that women were excluded from the republic of fame.
3. Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820 (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1994), xv; xviii.
4. Mary Scott, The Female Advocate; A Poem. Occasioned by Reading Mr Duncombe's Feminead (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), vii.
5. Carla Hesse, The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern (Stanford, CA and Oxford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.44.  
 For statistical analyses of women writers in the marketplace, see the 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', by James Raven, in Raven, ed., The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles. Volume I: 1770-1829 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.15-121; especially pp.39-56.
6. Mary Seymour Monague, An Original Essay on Women, in Four Epistles. Written by a Lady (London: A. Bridgeman, 1771), Epistle III, p.45.
7. Anne-Thérèse, Marchioness de Lambert, Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter (London, 1727), in The Young Lady's Pocket Library, or Parental Monitor; Containing, I. Dr Gregory's Father's Legacy to His Daughters, II. Lady Pennington's Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Daughters, III. Marchioness de Lambert's Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter, IV. Moore's Fables for the Female Sex (Dublin: J. Archer, 1790), ed., Vivien Jones (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p.141.
8. The Tatler, Saturday, October 15, 1709, in Donald F. Bond, ed., The Tatler, Volume II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p.13. Further references will be given parenthetically within the Introduction.
9. The Spectator, Saturday, December 22, 1711, in Gregory Smith, ed., The Spectator, Volume II (London: Dent, 1970), p.260.
10. The Spectator, Tuesday, December 25, 1711, in Smith, ed., The Spectator, p.266.

11. Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (Edinburgh, 1759), ed., D.D.Raphael and A.L.Macfie (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1984), p.116. All other references to this text will be given parenthetically in the Introduction.
12. Lord Byron, Don Juan (1819-24), in The Major Works, ed., Jerome J.McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), Canto XII, xviii, 137-44.
13. Thomas Martyn, Dissertations upon the Aeneids (1760), I, quoted in Mark Salber Phillips, Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.132.
14. Andrew Bennett, Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.2-3.
15. Bennett, Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity, p.66.
16. For a comprehensive account of the copyright debate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see: Mark Rose, Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1993). With added thanks to Gemma James for discussing with me the legal implications of copyright.
17. Eliza Haywood, The Memoirs of the Baron de Bosse (London, 1725), v.
18. Eliza Haywood, Letters from the Palace of Fame. Written by a First Minister in the Air to an Inhabitant of the World. Translated from an Arabian Manuscript (London: J.Roberts, 1727), p.2.
19. Haywood, Letters from the Palace of Fame, p1; p.11.
20. For an outstanding analysis of Haywood's career, see: Catherine Ingrassia, Authority, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).  
For an account of Haywood's anonymity, see Christine Blouch's article 'Eliza Haywood and the Romance of Obscurity', Studies in English Literature, XXXI (1991), 535-51.
21. The publication of Pamela and the resulting media frenzy is discussed in William B.Warner, Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750 (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1998) and Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, eds., Samuel Richardson's Pamela: The Critical Controversy, 1741-1761, VI volumes (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001).
22. See: Robert D.Mayo, The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815; With a Catalogue of 135 Magazine Novels and Novelettes (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.269.
23. Mary Robinson, 'Present State of the Manners, Society, &c. &c. of the Metropolis of England', Monthly Magazine and British Register, X (August – December 1800); October 1800, p.220.



24. For fascinating analyses of the actress Sarah Siddons' meteoric rise to fame, see the catalogue accompanying the exhibition held between July and September 1999 at the J.Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles: Robyn Asleson, ed., A Passion for Performance: Sarah Siddons and Her Portraitists (Los Angeles, CA: J.Paul Getty Museum, 1999). The essay by Robyn Asleson, "'She was Tragedy Personified': Crafting the Siddons Legend in Art and Life' is especially impressive on Siddons' engagement with her public images via dissemination of her portraiture. This excellent collection is limited because it is concerned only with artistic representation, thus ignoring other public means of fame production in the late eighteenth century.
25. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, The Critic (1779), in The School for Scandal and Other Plays, ed., Eric Rump (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), I.i.
26. Samuel Johnson, The Idler LX, Saturday, January 20, 1759, in The Works of Samuel Johnson, LLD (London: Pickering, 1825), p.269. For an outstanding account of the development of eighteenth-century advertising, see: Peter M.Briggs, "'News from the little World": A Critical Glance at Eighteenth-Century British Advertising', Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, XXIII (1994), 29-45.
27. Johnson, The Idler LX, p.267; p.269.
28. Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, February 1752, in W.S.Lewis, ed., Horace Walpole's Correspondence, XX (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.311. For more on the Gunnings' remarkable personal beauty, see chapter III of Robert W.Jones, Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
29. Sophie von La Roche, Sophie in London, 1786, being the Diary of Sophie von La Roche, trans., Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933), pp.216-17.
30. Helen Maria Williams, A Tour in Switzerland; or, A View of the Present State of Governments and Manners of these Cantons: with Comparative Sketches of the Present State of Paris, II Volumes, (London: G.G. and J.Robinson, 1798), Volume II, p.179.

## Notes to Chapter I

1. Quotations from, respectively: Edmund Burke, A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly (1791), in L.G.Mitchell, ed., The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke. Volume VIII: The French Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.314. All other references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

Adam Smith, 'A Letter to the Authors of the Edinburgh Review' (1755), in Essays on Philosophical Subjects, ed., W.P.D.Wightman and J.C.Bryce (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982), p.251.

2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Œuvres Complètes I, eds., Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p.1151. All references to the works of Rousseau will be from this five-volume edition, edited by Gagnebin and Raymond between 1959 and 1995. Volume and page numbers will be given parenthetically, where the edition will be referred to as OC.

All translations are my own. Contemporary English translations were considered execrable and often dismissed succinctly by periodicals in order to concentrate on the French original, which would have been read by the majority of people.

3. William Hazlitt, Conversations of James Northcote, Esq., RA (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), in P.P.Howe, ed., The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in 21 Volumes. Centenary Edition (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1930-1934), XVI, p.278. All other references to Hazlitt's writings will be from this edition which will be referred to in the text as HCW and followed by volume and page numbers.

4. Henri Roddier, J.-J.Rousseau en Angleterre au XVIIIème siècle (Paris: Boivin et Companie, 1950); Jacques Voisine, J.-J.Rousseau en Angleterre à l'époque romantique: les écrits autobiographiques et la légende (Paris: Didier, 1956); Edward Duffy, Rousseau in England: The Context for Shelley's Critique of the Enlightenment (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1979); Gregory Dart, Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

5. Chapters 2 and 4 of Elizabeth Rose Wingrave's Rousseau's Republican Romance (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) contain further discussion of Rousseau's concepts of *amour de soi* and *amour propre* in relation to political and gender theory.

6. See especially: Anna Attridge, 'The Reception of La Nouvelle Héloïse', Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, CXX (1974), 227-67; Claude Labrosse, Lire au XVIIIe siècle: La Nouvelle Héloïse et ses lecteurs (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1985); James H.Warner, 'Eighteenth-Century English Reactions to La Nouvelle Héloïse', PMLA, LII (1937), 803-17.

For a comprehensive overview of British textual response to La Nouvelle Héloïse, see: Claire Grogan, 'The Politics of Seduction in British Fiction of the 1790s: The Female Reader and Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse', Eighteenth-Century Fiction, XI



(1999), 459-76.

7. Perhaps only Jean Starobinski, in the classic psychoanalytic reading of Rousseau in J.-J. Rousseau, la Transparence et l'Obstacle (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), comes closest to a recognition of Rousseau's paradoxical participation in the fame game. Starobinski only concentrates very briefly, however, on Rousseau's own writings in the Confessions on this subject.

More recently, Carol Blum in Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986) has examined the posthumous political reception in France of Rousseau as 'the source of the cult of Rousseau' (p.37).

8. For excellent accounts of the publicity of Parisian privacy, see: Sarah Maza, Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Pre-Revolutionary France (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1993); and, with especial pertinence to Rousseauvian studies: Dena Goodman, 'The Hume-Rousseau Affair: From Private Querelle to Public Procès', Eighteenth-Century Studies, XXV (1991-1992), 171-202. Goodman's article debates 'the process by which private matter became public affair, readers became writers, and the reading public played its role as a tribunal of public opinion' (p.171).

9. R.A. Leigh, ed., Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Genève and Oxford: Institut et Musée Voltaire and Voltaire Foundation, 1965-1989), XXVIII, p.203. Future references to correspondence to, by, and about Rousseau will be from this edition and will be distinguished by the abbreviation CC. Volume and page numbers will be given parenthetically.

10. In 'Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensibility' Robert Darnton discusses the response of Jean Ranson to Rousseau's works, but entirely ignores the gender politics and implications of male reaction. See: The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp.215-56.

11. Boswellian studies have recently been enhanced by the work of Philip Carter. See especially: Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800 (London and Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education Ltd, 2001) and 'James Boswell's Manliness', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen, eds., English Masculinities 1660-1800 (London and New York: Longman, 1999), pp.111-30.

Although Carter provides illuminating discussions of Boswell's profound desire to 'be manly', and the various and often contradictory forms of behaviour this manliness entailed, he does not analyse, in either article or book, Boswell's relations with and relationship to Rousseau.

12. A thorough bibliographical analysis of publishing canniness over the release of Rousseau's Confessions can be found in: R.A. Leigh, Unsolved Problems in the Bibliography of J.-J. Rousseau, ed., J.T.A. Leigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.114-46.

For pre-Revolutionary reception of the Confessions, see: Bernard Gagnebin, 'L'étrange accueil fait au Confessions de Rousseau au XVIIIe siècle', Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, XXXVIII (1969-1971), 105-26; Wallace Katz, 'Le Rousseauisme avant la Révolution', Dix-huitième siècle, III (1971), 205-22; James H. Warner, 'The Basis of J.-J. Rousseau's Contemporaneous Reception in England', Modern Language Notes, LV (1940), 270-80.

13. Critical Review, LV (May 1783), 346.

14. European Magazine and London Literary Journal, III (October 1783), 276-77; 276.

15. Appendix to Monthly Review, LXVI (1782), 530-41; 530. Further references to this issue will be given in the chapter.

16. Monthly Review, LXVI (September 1782), 227-33; 227. Further references to this issue will be given in the chapter.

17. Gentleman's Magazine, LVI (September 1786), 744. Other references to this volume of the periodical will be given in the chapter.

18. Monthly Review, LXXIV (1786), 132-35.

19. Monthly Review, LXXIV (1786), 135.

20. Anon., A Tour to Ermenonville; Containing, Besides an Account of the Palace, Gardens, and Curiosities of CHANTILLY, And of the MARQUIS DE GIRARDIN'S beautiful seat of Ermenonville, A Particular description of the Tomb of J.J.ROUSSEAU, With Anecdotes (never before published) of that celebrated and singular Man (London: T.Becket, 1785), p.73. All other references to this text will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

21. John Villiers, A Tour through Part of France, Containing a Description of Paris, Cherbourg, and Ermenonville; with a Rhapsody Composed at the Tomb of Rousseau. In a Series of Letters (London: T.Cadell, 1789), p.213. All other references to this text will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

22. European Magazine and London Literary Journal, III (June 1783), 473.

23. Letters from Mrs Elizabeth Carter between the Years 1755 and 1800. Chiefly Upon Literary and Moral Subjects, ed., Rev. Montagu Pennington, III vols. (London: F.C. and J.Rivington, 1817), II, Letter CLXXII, Deal, 20 August 1774, p.268.

24. Reginald Blunt, ed., Mrs Montagu, 'Queen of the Blues': Her Letters and Friendships from 1762-1800, II: 1777-1800 (London: Constable, 1923), 30th September 1782, p.124. All other references to Montagu's letters will be given parenthetically.



25. Earl of Bessborough, Georgiana: Extracts of the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (London: John Murray, 1955), 24 October 1782, p.57. All other references to Georgiana's letters will be given parenthetically.

26. Germaine de Staël's Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau were published in 1788, while Isabelle de Charrière published two works concerning Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Éclaircissements relatifs à la publication des 'Confessions' de Rousseau, avec des réflexions sur la reputation, and Éloge de Jean-Jacques Rousseau (both 1790).

27. Mary Wollstonecraft, review of M.Guine's Letters on the Confessions of J.J.Rousseau, Analytical Review, XI (1791), 528, in Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, eds., The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Volume VII (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1989), p.409.

28. Mary Hays, 'A Reply to J.T. on Helvétius', Monthly Magazine, I (June 1796), 386-87.

29. Mary Hays, Memoirs of Emma Courtney (London: G.G. and J.Robinson, 1796), ed., Eleanor Ty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Monthly Review, XXII (1797), 443-49; 443.

Although Hays was often satirized for her passionate outpourings by novelists such as Elizabeth Hamilton in Memoirs of Modern Philosophers (1800), the critical and public reception was more than favourable. Emma Courtney later went on to achieve editions in America and a French translation appeared in 1799.

30. Information collated myself from figures in: Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Schöwerling, eds., The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles, II vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

31. Blackwood's Magazine, XI (February 1822), 137-53; 144. Further references will be given in the chapter.

32. Edinburgh Magazine, X (June 1822), 742-45; 742. Further references will be given in the chapter.

33. Lady Caroline Lamb, Glenarvon (London: Henry Colburn, 1816), ed., Frances Wilson (London: J.M.Dent, 1995), p.95. All other references will be to this edition and references will be given parenthetically in the chapter. This edition reproduces the first and original 1816 text; later editions (there were three in 1816 alone) were heavily edited and censored.

34. Lord Byron, Childe Harolde's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt (1812-1818), Canto III (1816), LXXXI, 763, in Jerome J.McGann, Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works. Volume II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

35. Leslie A. Marchand, ed., Byron's Letters and Journals, XII volumes (London: John Murray, 1975-1982), II, p.194.
36. See especially the excellent essay by Marilyn Butler, 'Satire and the Images of the Self in the Romantic Period: The Long Tradition of Hazlitt's Liber Amoris', in Claude Rawson, ed., English Satire and the Satiric Tradition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp.209-25. Also: Robert Ready, 'The Logic of Passion: Hazlitt's Liber Amoris', Studies in Romanticism, XIV (1975), 41-57; James Treadwell, 'The Legibility of Liber Amoris', Romanticism on the Net, XVII (February 2000), 1-15; and Duncan Wu, 'Hazlitt's Liber Amoris: A Defence', Wordsworth Circle, XXXI (2000), 20-25.
37. Pygmalion par M.J.-J.Rousseau, Scène Lyrique (Genève, 1771). All other references will be to this pre-performance edition.
38. See: Alexandra K. Wettlaufer, Pens Vs Paintbrush: Girodet, Balzac and the Myth of Pygmalion in Post-Revolutionary France (New York: Palgrave, 2001), especially pp.14-17.
39. In Pens Vs Paintbrush, Wettlaufer suggests that 'not insignificantly it was Rousseau who popularized the name Galathée for the statue, linking her with nature and endowing a nameless figure with a subject position' (p.14).



## Notes to Chapter Two

1. [Richard Paul Joddrell], The Female Patriot: An Epistle from C---t---e M---c---y to the Reverend Dr W---l---n. On her late marriage. With Critical, Historical, and Philosophical Notes and Illustrations (London: J.Bew, 1779), l.170. Further references to this satire will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

2. Catharine Macaulay Graham, Letters on Education. With Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects (London: C.Dilly, 1790). This text will be referred to as Education in the rest of the chapter with page numbers given in parenthesis.

3. Mary Wollstonecraft, review of Letters on Education, Analytical Review, VIII (1790), 241-54; 254.

4. City Biography (1800), LXXXVII; quoted in Bridget Hill, The Republican Virago: The Life and Times of Catharine Macaulay, Historian (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.58.

5. 'P.N.', 'Letter from a Gentleman in Town to his Friend in the Country, Concerning Celebrated Female Historians', Town and Country Magazine, I (1796), 91-92.

6. Hill, The Republican Virago, p.103.

7. Karen O'Brien, Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.8.

8. Hill, The Republican Virago, p.99.

9. Catharine Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line, VIII vols. (London: E. and C.Dilly, 1769-1783). All further references to the History of England will be given in parenthesis in the chapter, along with volume and page number, where this text will be referred to as History.

10. For a very brief but illuminating account of the contention of Hume and Macaulay for historical laurels, see: Natalie Zemon Davis, 'History's Two Bodies', American Historical Review, XCIII (1988), 1-30; especially 1-18.

11. European Magazine and London Review, IV (1783), 330-34; 332.

12. A.Birabeau, Life and Letters at Bath in the Eighteenth Century (1904), p.171; quoted in Hill, The Republican Virago, p.44.

Sir George Otto Trevelyan, The American Revolution (1903), II vols., ii, p.275; quoted in Hill, The Republican Virago, p.23.

13. Monthly Review, XXIX (1763), 374.

14. For a brief discussion of the debate and its outcomes see my Introduction.

15. Catharine Macaulay, A Modest Plea for the Property of Copy Right (Bath: R.Crutwell; London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1774), pp.14-15. All other references will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

16. For Johnson's comments on Macaulay, see Susan Staves, "'The Liberty of a She-Subject of England': Rights Rhetoric and the Female Thucydides", Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature, I (1989), 161-83; 178.

Johnson's most public reaction to Macaulay is said to have taken place at a drinking-party at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1785, where, according to a Gentleman's Magazine journalist, he 'stripped poor Mrs Macaulay to the very skin, then gave her for his toast and drank her in two bumpers' (p.178).

17. Macaulay, History of England, I, 'Introduction', viii.

18. Susan Wiseman, 'Catharine Macaulay: history, republicanism and the public sphere', in Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona O Gallchoir and Penny Warburton, eds., Women, Writing and the Public Sphere 1700-1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.181-99; p.194.

19. Wiseman, 'Catharine Macaulay', p.194.

20. Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1784); quoted in Mark Salber Phillips, Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain 1740-1820 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.44.

21. Catharine Macaulay, The History of England, from the Revolution to the Present Time. In a Series of Letters to the Reverend Dr Wilson, Rector of St Stephen's Walbrook, and Prebendary of Westminster, Vol.I (Bath: R.Crutwell, 1778), iii, pp.123-24; iv, p.181. Further references to letter and page number will be given in parenthesis in the chapter.

22. Mary Hays, Female Biography; or, Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women, of all Ages and Countries. Alphabetically Arranged, VI vols., (London: R.Phillips, 1803): 'Catherine [sic.] Macaulay Graham', V, pp.287-306; p.287; p.292.

23. Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser, Wednesday 10 September 1777; quoted in Robert Pierpoint, Catharine Macaulay. HISTORY. The Marble Statue in the Entrance Hall of Warrington Town Hall (Private Circulation from articles first appearing in Warrington Guardian, December 1908 and March 1910); pp.6-7 (1910).

24. Even the most recent references to the statue concentrate fully on what critics perceive as its overwhelmingly damaging effects to Macaulay's reputation. Wiseman suggests that the responses to the monument were universally '[h]ostile' (p.192). Harriet Guest's analysis is more nuanced, but while examining sources that make reference to



Macaulay as a 'living' statue, she does not pick up on this aspect at all; see Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810 (Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press, 2000) pp.160-61 and pp.198-99 especially.

25. Letters from Mrs Elizabeth Carter to Mrs Montagu, between the years 1755 and 1800, Chiefly upon literary and moral subjects, III vols., ed., Montagu Pennington (London: Rivington, 1817), III, p.40; Letter cciv, 20 September 1777, Deal.

26. Gentleman's Magazine, XLVII (1777), 470.

27. Vestry minutes quoted in Pierpoint, 'Catharine Macaulay. HISTORY', pp.4-6 (1910).

28. Gentleman's Magazine, III (1791), 618.

29. Gentleman's Magazine, XLVII (1777), 470.

30. Lady's Magazine, VIII (October 1777), pp.508-10. All other references will be provided in parenthesis in the chapter. Many thanks to Jennie Batchelor for drawing my attention to the existence of this article.

31. Montagu to Carter, 24 November 1777. The Montagu Correspondence, The Huntingdon Library, San Marino, CA, MO 3435. Quoted in Elizabeth Eger, 'Representing culture: "The Nine Living Muses"', in Eger et al, eds., Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, pp.104-32; p.123. See the rest of this excellent and important article for further discussion of the 'Nine Living Muses' as 'cultural standard bearers of considerable influence' (p.112).

32. Letters from Carter to Montagu, III, p.47; Letter ccvi, 23 November 1777, Deal.

33. Guest, Small Change, pp.249-50.

34. Eleutheria: A Poem Inscribed to Mrs Macaulay (London: J.Harrison, 1768), p.2. Further references will be given, in parenthesis, in the chapter. It has been suggested, both by Macaulay's contemporaries and recent critics that the writer of this panegyric was the historian William Robertson, which would represent another coup for the 'celebrated Female Historian' in achieving historical laurels at the expense of her male rivals. See Hill, The Republican Virago, pp.20-21 for evidence of Robertson's authorship

35. An Irregular Ode, Respectfully Inscribed to Mrs Macaulay & Presented on her Birthday, April 2d 1777, one of the Six Odes Presented to That justly-celebrated HISTORIAN Mrs. CATHARINE MACAULAY ON HER BIRTH-DAY, & publicly read to a polite and brilliant Audience, Assembled April the Second, at Alfred-House, Bath. To congratulate that lady on the happy occasion (Bath: Crutwell; London: E. and C.Dilly, J.Walter, T.Cadell, and J.Alman, 1777). Further references appear in the chapter in parenthesis.

While the Odes have attracted both eighteenth-century and contemporary critical disdain for their occasionally laughable praise of Macaulay, what is seemingly never realized is that they were sold for public benefit, to aid a 'worthy CLERGYMAN in distress', instantly linking Catharine Macaulay's fame and the celebration of it with civic virtue.

36. Mary Scott, The Female Advocate; A Poem. Occasioned by Reading Mr Duncombe's Feminead (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), 'To a Lady', v. Other references will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

37. Mary Seymour Montague, An Original Essay on Women, in Four Epistles. Written by a Lady (London: A. Bridgeman, 1771), p.2; pp.39-40. For a more lengthy discussion of this text see: Isobel Grundy, 'Mary Seymour Montague: Anonymity and "Old Satirical Codes"', in Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain, eds., Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820 (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan and the Centre for English Studies, University of London, 1999), pp.67-80. Grundy notes that '[p]rominence among contemporaries (the first extended passage) is awarded to Macaulay, the most transgressive' (p.73).

38. But politics had pav'd the road of love,  
Science had mingled in our chaste delights,  
A kiss had ratified the BILL OF RIGHTS,  
All my LOOSE THOUGHTS had toy'd the night away,  
And thrilling REVOLUTIONS mark'd the day.

A Remarkable Moving Letter! (London: Shakespeare Press, 1779), p.7.

39. Critical Review, LV (1783), 212; 216.



### Notes to Chapter III

1. Review of Vancenza: or The Dangers of Credulity; a Moral Tale, Critical Review, XXVII (1792), 268-72; 271.
2. Lars E. Troide, ed., The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney. Vol. II - 1774-1777 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.94.
3. Rambler's Magazine, I (October 1783), p.362. All other references to the Rambler's Magazine will be given in the text, where it will be distinguished by the abbreviation RM, and will be followed by the number and date of the issue, and page number.
4. While attracting a number of early twentieth-century biographies, which tend to be sentimentalised and overly fictional, such as Stanley V. Mackower's Perdita: A Romance in Biography (London: Hutchinson, 1908), Lily Moresby Adams Beck's The Exquisite Perdita (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1926) and Marguerite Steen's The Lost One: A Biography of Mary (Perdita) Robinson (London: Methuen, 1937), Robinson has received no exclusively biographical attention since the last account of her life in the 1950s, which she shared with Banastre Tarleton: Robert D. Bass' The Green Dragoon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson (London: Alvin Redman, 1957). Bass's account, although devoting most attention to Tarleton, explores vital and valuable primary material, especially newspaper accounts which chart Robinson's rise to fame.
5. The first issue of the Rambler's Magazine, published in January 1783, devotes an astonishing amount of coverage to Robinson, her public appearances and adventures: including an account of a 'Dialogue' between Robinson and her rival contemporaries on the stage, illustrated by an image of the actresses's 'preparing to receive company'; a satirical legal document, peppered with sexual *double entendres*, entitled 'A Singular Lease of Certain Premises, From Florizel to Perdita', also accompanied with an engraving, detailing 'Florizel granting Independency to Perdita', where the Prince's regal command, 'Submit to my will', is met with an more powerful counter-demand from Robinson, who holds out a paper and claims: 'Declare me Independant and then ---'. Furthermore, Robinson appears, unbelievably, in half of the eight days in December 1782 covered by the 'Amorous and Bon Ton Intelligence' section of the magazine.
6. Pierce Egan, Mistress of Royalty; or, the Loves of Florizel and Perdita, Portrayed in the Amatory Epistles Between an Illustrious Personage, and a Distinguished Female: With an Interesting Sketch of Florizel and Perdita, Including Other Characters (London: P. Egan, 1814). For a brief discussion of this text, see: J.C. Reid, Bucks and Bruisers: Pierce Egan and Regency England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).
7. Perdita: The Memoirs of Mary Robinson (1758-1800): Poet, novelist, feminist, first mistress of George IV, ed., M.J. Levy (London: Peter Owen, 1994), p.113. All other

references to the first two volumes of the Memoirs will be from this edition and will be referred to as: Robinson, Memoirs.

8. For further detail on the politics and history of the Morning Post in the eighteenth century, see: Wilfrid Hindle, The Morning Post 1772-1937: Portrait of a Newspaper (London: Routledge, 1937), especially pp.7-104.

9. Monthly Magazine; or, British Register, I (February 1796), iii. Further references to the Monthly Magazine will be given in parenthesis in the chapter followed by volume and page numbers.

10. 'The Critical Review offered only two guineas a sheet, but the Monthly Review offered four. In 1796, Southey was writing for the newly established Monthly Magazine at five guineas a sheet', Lee Erickson, The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.75.

11. Eleanor Ty, Empowering the Feminine: The Narratives of Mary Robinson, Jane West, and Amelia Opie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p.413.

12. Lynda M.Thompson, The 'Scandalous Memoirists': Constantia Phillips, Laetitia Pilkington, and the shame of 'publick fame' (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.180.

Although a significant contribution to Robinson studies, the first collection of essays on Robinson in the journal Women's Writing, IX (2002) still, disappointingly, in the majority of the essays, perpetuates the views of Thompson and Ty.

13. 'Address' to Rambler's Magazine, I (January 1783).

14. 'Memoirs of the Doating Lover and the Dramatic Enchantress', Town and Country Magazine, XIII (May 1780), 232-36. While the Town and Country Magazine serialized the notorious 'Tête-à-Têtes' between 1769 and 1790, it also contained other more serious items, including in-depth sections on domestic and foreign news, extracts from classical texts, and mathematical problems. There has still been very little published on the more scandalous magazines of the later eighteenth century, but a masterly overview of the Tête-à-Tête series and its historical and cultural contexts can be found in Cindy McCreery, 'Keeping up with the Bon Ton: the Tête-à-Tête series in the Town and Country Magazine', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, eds., Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities (London and New York: Longman, 1997), pp.206-29.

15. 'Address', Rambler's Magazine, I (January 1783). Despite the concentration on female extravagance and the sexual exploits of Robinson and her contemporaries, it appears that women did contribute to the magazine, whether to criticize the behaviour of



their more 'impure sisters' or to retail similar adventures. See especially the edition of May 1783.

16. Letters quoted in Bass, The Green Dragoon, p.67.

17. Letter quoted in Bass, The Green Dragoon, pp.253-54.

18. Anon., The Memoirs of Perdita; Interspersed With Anecdotes of the Hon. Charles F---x; Lord M---; Col. T---; P--- of W---; Col. St. L---r; Mr S---n, & Many Other Well Known Characters (London: G.Lister, 1784), p.3; p.71. Cheryl Turner, in Living By the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), treats the text as if it were a faithful, factual account, actually written by Mary Robinson (p.77), thus ignoring the subtle, loaded 'Introduction'.

19. Morning Post, 29 May 1783. Quoted in Bass, The Green Dragoon, p.212

Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), Robert W.Jones, Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Harriet Guest, Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810 (Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press, 2000) offer comprehensive accounts of women's place in eighteenth-century consumer culture.

Diego Saglia, in 'The Dangers of Over-Refinement: The Language of Luxury in Romantic Poetry by Women', Studies in Romanticism, XXXVIII (1999), 641-73, presents an illuminating analysis of the relationship between luxury and genius in Robinson's poem The Progress of Liberty.

20. 'Memoirs of the Doating Lover and the Dramatic Enchantress', Town and Country Magazine, XIII (May 1780), 235.

21. 'Memoirs of the Doating Lover and the Dramatic Enchantress', 236.

22. Letter quoted in Bass, The Green Dragoon, p.199.

23. Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions, III vols. (London: Longman, 1824), II, p.24.

24. Anon., Memoirs of Perdita, p.105.

25. Morning Herald, 30 October 1782; 20 November 1782. Quoted in Bass, The Green Dragoon, p.204.

For the '*chemise de la reine*', see: Aileen Ribeiro, The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France, 1780-1820 (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1995) and Amanda Foreman, Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire (London: HarperCollins,

1998). Grateful thanks to Maggie Selby for drawing my attention to Foreman's erroneous attribution to Georgiana.

In Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715-1789 (London: B.T.Batsford, 1984), Ribeiro had previously suggested that 'Perdita Robinson' (*sic.*) instigated the fashion for a different version of the chemise. Ribeiro, however, not only claims here that Robinson popularized an anglicized version of the dress, but distances Robinson's trendsetting both temporally and spatially from her supposed aristocratic influences (p.155). I owe this reference to the critical vigilance of Jennie Batchelor.

Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun's 1783 portrait of the Queen of France entitled Marie Antoinette en Chemise (private collection, Germany) details this infamous dress. Ribeiro's account reproduces this image.

26. Morning Chronicle, 28 November 1782. Quoted in Bass, The Green Dragon, p.204.

27. Reproduced in the rarely reprinted third volume of Memoirs of the Late Mrs Robinson, Written By Herself, With Some Posthumous Pieces, IV volumes (London: R.Phillips, 1801), III, Essay VII, p.37; p.39.

28. Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (Edinburgh, 1759), ed., D.D.Raphael and A.L.Macfie (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press Inc., 1982), p.64.

29. Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, p.197.

30. Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp.194-95.

31. Anon., The Vis-a-Vis of Berkeley Square; or, A Wheel off Mrs W \* T \* N's Carriage. Inscribed to Florizel (London: n.p., 1783), p.14; pp.23-24.

32. Dr John Gregory, A Father's Legacy to his Daughters (1774), reprinted in The Young Lady's Pocket Library, Or Parental Monitor; Containing I. DR GREGORY'S Father's Legacy to His Daughters. II. LADY PENNINGTON'S Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Daughters. III. MARCHIONESS DE LAMBERT'S Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter. IV. MOORE'S Fables for the Female Sex (London, 1790), ed., Vivien Jones (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p.20.

33. Gill Perry reads this image more negatively, asserting that 'within the context of a satirical image on the theme of personal life [. . .] Robinson's attempts to "take the reins" [. . .] could be read by contemporaries as a metaphor for her own controlling sexuality, for her morally corrupting status as a "Woman of the People", "'The British Sappho": Borrowed Identities and the Representation of Women Artists in Late Eighteenth-Century British Art', Oxford Art Journal, XVIII (1995), 44-57; 55.

The original image was engraved by T. Colley and published on 17 December 1782.

34. The miniature is now in The Wallace Collection, London. For an assessment of Robinson's portraits and a list of all the known images of Robinson see John Ingamells,



Mrs Robinson and Her Portraits, Wallace Collection Monograph I (London: The Trustees of The Wallace Collection, 1978).

In "The British Sappho", Gill Perry puts forward an argument for the inclusion of a portrait of the British Sappho by Angelika Kauffman, now held in a private collection, in the list of authentic portraits of Robinson.

35. Marcia Pointon gives a comprehensive account of 'the dissemination of portraiture through a vast array of media in the eighteenth century' and the 'application of portraits and other works to decorative and utilitarian objects' in Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Eighteenth-Century Social Formation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p.84.

36. Pointon, Hanging the Head, p.39.

37. Public Advertiser, 19 April 1782.

38. In an article entitled 'Perdita and her Painters: Portraits of Mary Robinson, Joseph Greco retitled the Reynolds picture Contemplation. Mrs Robinson. See: The Connoisseur, V (1903), 99-107. Subsequent readings of Robinson's portraits have tended to read this painting and others of this period in the same way, stressing Robinson's status as an invalid and victim. See especially Ingamells, Mrs Robinson and Her Portraits and Ty, Empowering the Feminine.

39. No exact cause has ever been established for Robinson's mysterious paralysis. Maria Elizabeth Robinson, who completed her mother's Memoirs and edited her poems, attributed her debilitation to her 'imprudent exposure to the night air in travelling, when, exhausted by fatigue and mental anxiety, she slept in a chaise with the windows open, brought on a fever, which confined her to her bed during six months. The disorder terminated, at the conclusion of that period, in *a violent rheumatism, which progressively deprived her of the use of her limbs*'. Memoirs, pp.123-24.

Biographers and Robinson's own contemporaries have been less vague in their pronouncements. Bass claims that in chasing after a debt-ridden Tarleton, Robinson miscarried a child 'and in the ordeal she was paralysed', adding rather facetiously that 'Mary had paid her forfeit to love'. He also cites a letter from Lord Pembroke to Lord Herbert, which states that '[Robinson] must not go any more to an opera on the day of miscarriage', The Green Dragoon, p.225.

40. In making this claim I am influenced by, but would question the sexual politics of, Leo Braudy's argument in The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) that:

the portrait of a great man looking at the viewer denotes a self-satisfaction with social status. But his looking away conveys an assurance of personal destiny that makes a direct appeal to the viewer unnecessary and irrelevant. It is this pose of independence

and self-sufficiency that typifies the most famous figures of the age, whether they are in the sphere of politics or art (p.399).

41. Mary Robinson, Monody to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds (London: J.Bell, 1792), reprinted in The Poetical Works of the Late Mrs Mary Robinson: Including Many Pieces Never Before Published. In Three Volumes, III (London: R.Phillips, 1806), pp.53-62. ll.58-60.

It seems that Robinson's affection for Reynolds was reciprocated: he kept this portrait. See Ingamells, Mrs Robinson and Her Portraits, p.34.

42. Robinson, Monody, ll.196; 168.

43. Robinson, Monody, ll.235-42.

44. The Reynolds portrait would form the frontispiece to Robinson's Poems (1791), her Lyrical Tales (1800), and, most importantly the image disseminated after her death, prefacing her collected Poetical Works (1806).

45. Richard Tickell, 'To Mrs Robinson', reprinted as one of the 'Tributary Poems' in The Poetical Works of the Late Mrs Robinson, I, xxxx [*sic.*].

46. Sharon Setzer, 'Mary Robinson's Sylphid Self: The End of Feminine Self-Fashioning', Philological Quarterly, LXXV (1996), 501-20.

47. Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), xviii.

Only Judith Pascoe, in the recently published edition of Robinson's poems, briefly acknowledges a different image of the Robinson 'fame machine': 'Robinson went a long way towards establishing a new identity for herself as a poet, but without, it must be acknowledged, cutting herself entirely free of the sensational streamers of her past life'. 'Introduction' to Pascoe, ed., Mary Robinson: Selected Poems (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), pp.19-61; p.37.

48. Analytical Review, I (1799), 209-10; 209.

49. Analytical Review, XII (1792), 339-41; 339.

50. European Magazine, XXI (1792), 344-48; 345; 347.

51. Critical Review, XXXVII (1792), 268-272; 272.

52. Monthly Magazine and British Register, VII (1799), 541.  
European Magazine, XXVII (1799), 138-39; 139.



53. Mary Robinson, 'Preface' to Vancenza; or, The Dangers of Credulity (London: J.Bell, 1792).

In making this claim I am influenced by Hannah Barker's argument that the most insurrectionary form of letter published in a late eighteenth-century newspaper was one which 'chose not to address members of the political élite [. . .] and directed their letters of grievance "to the public". Such immediate appeals to those out of doors, from one of their number, bypassed traditional political authority altogether', Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.40.

54. Critical Review, XXXVII (1792), 272.

55. Mary Robinson, The Natural Daughter. With Portraits of the Leadenhead Family. A Novel, II Volumes (London: Longman and Rees, 1799), II, p.37. Further references will be given parenthetically in the chapter, where this novel will be referred to as ND.

56. Mary Robinson, Walsingham; Or, The Pupil of Nature. A Domestic Story, IV Volumes (London: Longman and Rees, 1797), III, p.236.

57. Gallagher, Nobody's Story, p.165.

58. Gallagher, Nobody's Story, p.213.

59. In Women Writing About Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790-1820 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Edward Copeland claims categorically that 'no character in any woman's novel, with rare exception, ever seeks to be an author. [. . .] The steady reluctance of women authors to turn their heroines into authors constitutes a telling gauge of women's position in the writing profession' (p.192).

60. Robinson's poetic pseudonyms have attracted more critical attention than any other aspect of her career. See especially Stuart Curran, 'Mary Robinson's Lyrical Tales in Context', in Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner, eds., Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776-1837 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp.17-35, and Judith Pascoe, 'Mary Robinson and the Literary Marketplace', in Paula R.Feldman and Theresa M.Kelley, eds., Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 1995), pp.252-68.

Curran notes that Robinson employed the following pseudonyms in 1799-1800: Laura, Laura Maria, Lesbia, M.R., Oberon, Sappho, the Sylphid, T.B., Tabitha Bramble, and Titania. Pascoe adds Julia, Portia, and Bridget.

61. Letter to Samuel Jackson Pratt, 31 August 1800, published in Kenneth Neill Cameron, ed., Shelley and His Circle 1773-1822, Volume I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp.231-35. The original is in the Shelley Circle Pforzheimer Collection, New York Public Library.

62. Robinson's pseudonyms are almost all names of famous women from illustrious plays by Shakespeare, or with celebrated literary pedigrees such as the Popean Sylphid, the Petrarchan Laura, or Sappho, one of the most famed female writers in history.

63. 'The Sylphid Essays', Memoirs of the Late Mrs Robinson, Vol. III. Essay X, p.51. All other references to the Sylphid Essays will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

Robinson's 'Sylphid' essays have received very little critical attention, possibly due to the absence of the third volume of the 1801 Memoirs from modern reprints. Judith Pascoe comments briefly on the essays in 'The Spectacular *Flâneuse*: Mary Robinson and the City of London', The Wordsworth Circle, XXIII (1992), 165-71. Sharon Setzer discusses a selection in 'Mary Robinson's Sylphid Self: The End of Feminine Self-Fashioning', Philological Quarterly, LXXV (1996), 501-20. Neither refer to the excessive concern with fame in the essays.

64. Mary Robinson, Sappho and Phaon. In a Series of Legitimate Sonnets, With Thoughts on Poetical Subjects, and Anecdotes of the Grecian Poetess (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1796), reprinted in Pascoe, ed., Mary Robinson: Selected Poems, pp.144-80, 'To the Reader', p.150. Further references will be to the Pascoe edition; page numbers will be given parenthetically.

Pascoe notes that the reference to the unsupportive nature of the 'courts' may be 'casting a barb at the Prince of Wales who was often remiss in paying the annuity she was promised from him in the aftermath of their affair' (p.149).

65. Originally published under the pseudonym 'Anne Frances Randall', Robinson owned the text within the year with the release of the second edition.

66. Mary Hays, in her 1803 Female Biography, concentrated primarily on the illustrious of history. Very few eighteenth-century writers in comparison and hardly any novelists were included. Like Mary Wollstonecraft, Robinson was missing from Hays' account.

67. [Mary Robinson], A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination. With Anecdotes (London: Longman and Rees, 1799), ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Poole and Washington D.C.: Woodstock Books, 1998), p.64. This edition does not publish the 'List of British Female Literary Characters Living in the Eighteenth Century', which is, however, reproduced with the rest of the Letter in Tamae Mizuta and Marie Mulvey Roberts, eds., The Radicals: Revolutionary Women (London: Thoemmes Press, 1994). Further references will be given parenthetically in the chapter, where this text will be referred to as Letter.

68. James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', in Raven, ed., The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles. Volume I: 1770-1799 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.15-121; p.48. Raven also suggests that 'female authorship was being deliberately promoted,



[because] it was exactly at this time [. . .] that an unprecedented number of otherwise anonymous title-pages also bore the attribution to 'a Lady' (p.48)

69. There are 22 'Tributary Poems' reprinted in the Poetical Works, from the pens of well-known men, including Coleridge and Robert Merry. All comment on a combination of Robinson's poetic talent and her astonishing beauty. Others are from Robinson's many admirers, including a poem submitted to the Oracle in 1798 by '*Il morti timido*', who effectively represents a member of Robinson's 'public', seduced and even driven to distraction by her enchanting celebrity:

But he whose scalding tears are flowing,  
Whose aching breast heaves many a sigh,  
Whose soul with fondest love is glowing,  
Must hide his heart's *first* wish, and die! (xliv).

70. Preface to British Public Characters 1798 (London: R.Phillips, 1798), vii.

In Hanging the Head, Marcia Pointon emphasises the political importance of an inclusion in this illustrious series: 'Publications of this kind served to lay before the public the portraits (images and biographies) of leading members of Lords and Commons in response to increased interest in parliament, as opposed to court [. . .] and [were] calculated to enhance the reputations for dependability and good judgment of those figured within them' (p.97).

71. Preface to Public Characters 1800-1801, II vols. (London: R.Phillips, 1801), iii; v: my emphasis. The only other woman in this edition is Robinson's fellow novelist Charlotte Smith, quite a coup for the female writer.

72. Entry on 'Mary Robinson', Public Characters 1800-1801, pp.327-37.

## Notes to Chapter IV

1. [Dr Charles Burney], 'Advice to The Herald', Morning Herald, 12 March 1782, quoted in [Charlotte Barrett], Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay, Author of Evelina, Cecilia, &c. Volume II - 1781 to 1786 (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), p.134. All other references to this text will be given parenthetically in the chapter, where it will be referred to as DL.

2. Anna Laetitia Barbauld apparently made a direct link between the two: 'next to the balloon Miss Burney [was] the object of public curiosity'. Quoted in Constance Hill, Juniper Hall (London and New York: J.Lane, 1904), p.244.

Contemporary fiction made a similar connection between publicity puffs and the rise of the celebrity. The scandalous 'novel', The Modern Atalantis; or, The Devil in an Air Balloon. Containing the Characters and Secret Memoirs of the Most Conspicuous Persons of High Quality, of Both Sexes, in the Island of Libertusia, in the Western Ocean. Translated from the Libertusian Language (London: G.Kearsley, 1784) offers accounts of the famous, which the Monthly Review derided for lack of invention: 'The news-papers and the common fame of the day, supplied him with the whole fund of private and personal scandal, which he hath here retailed' (LXXI [1784], 231). Unsurprisingly, Mary Robinson, as the 'frail Maria', receives a chapter of her own (pp.54-8).

Although deeply satirical about both the famous and scientific invention, the text ends with an advertisement announcing a 'Fourth Edition' of A Treatise on Air Balloons.

For more detail on the ballooning craze of the late eighteenth century and the art of self-inflation, see Matthew Craske, Art in Europe 1700-1830: A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially pp.31-32.

3. Joanne Cutting-Gray, Woman as 'Nobody' in the Novels of Fanny Burney (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), p.1; p.137.

See also: James Thompson, Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996). Thompson simply concludes that 'Burney's writings display an aversion to publicity' (p.158).

Janice Farrar Thaddeus is so far the only supporter of a critical position which takes Frances Burney seriously as a professional writer actively engaging in the late eighteenth-century fiction market: 'The woman was secure in her public position as author [. . .]. This point must be made --- and made firmly ---because Burney has so often been depicted as self-deprecating, even fearful' (p.3). Even Thaddeus, however, cannot resist returning occasionally to champion the typical opinion of Burney's public ineptitudes: '[Hester Thrale] was in public Burney's opposite: brilliant, talkative, and outgoing', Frances Burney: A Literary Life (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.30.

4. Thaddeus makes a similar point:

I would hazard that no other writer --- not even Samuel Richardson



--- has supplied in such detail the aftermath of a publication. She quotes family friends on the subject of Evelina, both when they know the author and when they don't. When she takes up residence with Hester Thrale and meets Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, she quotes what the influential men have to say. [. . .] Evelina's fate is the subject of letter after letter.

A Literary Life, p.50.

Thaddeus does not mention, however, that this obsessive habit of recording all her puffs continues throughout her literary career.

5. In Companions Without Vows: Relationships Among Eighteenth-Century British Women (Athens, GA and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), Betty Rizzo labels Burney 'in almost all ways [. . .] Dr Gregory's ideal woman' (p.83), a character 'committed to the altruistic values of sensibility and therefore incapable of marrying for money or conniving at the acquisition of ascendancy over others' (p.82).

6. Lars E. Troide, ed., The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney, Volume I: 1768-1773 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.216-17. Currently, two more volumes of Burney's unpublished early writings have been printed: Volume II: 1774-1777 (1990) and Volume III, The Streatham Years: Part I - 1778-1779 (1994). Volume IV is forthcoming. Future references to these volumes will be given parenthetically, along with the date of the letter, volume and page number, and be referred to as EJL.

7. Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling, 'General Introduction' to James Raven, ed., The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles. Volume I. 1770-1799 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Garside *et al* conclude that: 'The malaise in novel production seems to have lasted from about 1775 to 1783, coterminous, perhaps, incidentally, with the American war. [. . .] [W]hat it was that so depressed novel production in those years currently remains unexplained' (pp.226-27).

8. Memoirs of Dr Burney, Arranged from his own manuscripts, from family papers, and from Personal Recollections. By His Daughter, Madame D'Arblay. In III Volumes (London: Edward Moxton, 1832), p.126. Further references will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

9. Monthly Review, LVIII (April 1778), 316.  
Critical Review, XLVI (Sept. 1778), 202-204; 202.

10. Information from Raven, ed., The English Novel, p.40; p.269.

11. Burney to Dr Burney, Great Bookham, 8 Nov. 1796 in Joyce Hemlow, ed., The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay), Volume III: Great Bookham, 1793-1797 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p.222.

12. Frank Donoghue, The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.170; p.171.

13. [Frances Burney], Evelina: or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World (London: T.Lowndes, 1778), ed., Kristina Straub (Boston, MA and New York: Bedford Books, 1997). All other references to Evelina will be from this edition and given parenthetically.

14. To 'see the lyons', or witness famous sights and even illustrious personages. For usage, see [Frances Burney], Cecilia; or, Memoirs of an Heiress (London: Payne and Cadell, 1782), ed., Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), where, after watching an opera rehearsal, Monckton asks Morrice '*why he did not shew the lyons?*' (p.67). All other references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

15. Patricia Meyer Spacks, Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.165.

16. Quoted in Paul Metzner, Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-Promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1998), p.128.

17. Dr John Gregory, A Father's Legacy to His Daughters (1774), in The Young Lady's Pocket Library, or Parental Monitor; Containing I. Dr Gregory's Father's Legacy to his Daughters. II. Lady Pennington's Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Daughters. III. Marchioness de Lambert's Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter. IV. Moore's Fables for the Female Sex (Dublin: J.Archer, 1790), ed., Vivien Jones (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p.23.

This link between misconduct and improper dancing is exemplified in Burney's unpublished play The Woman-Hater (c.1800), where changeling Joyce rejects 'stultifying learning':

March off, Mr Thompson! decamp Mrs Chapone! away  
Watts' improvement of the mind, and off! off! off! with a  
hop, skip, and a jump, ye Ramblers, Spectators, and  
Adventurers (*throwing about the Books and dancing round them*).

Peter Sabor, ed., The Complete Plays of Frances Burney: Volume I, Comedies (London: William Pickering, 1995), I.iv.34-7.

18. Critical Review, 46 (Sept.1778), 202.

19. Katharine C. Balderston, ed., Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs Hester Lynch Thrale (later Mrs Piozzi) 1776-1809. Volume I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p.368.



20. Balderston, ed., Thraliana, I, p.413.

21. Hester Chapone, Letters on the Improvement of the Mind addressed to a young lady (London: J.Walker, 1773), in Rhoda Zuk, ed., Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785. Volume III: Catherine Talbot and Hester Chapone (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), pp.261-356; p.297.

22. In a letter of 25 Nov. 1783, to her sister Susanna, Burney claims that George Cambridge, with whom she was violently in love at this time, 'braved all difficulties to talk with me, & stood facing me, & chatting all the night, & though Mrs Chapone frequently offered to join in the discourse, we were both in too high spirits for her *seriousity*, & rattled away without minding her' Quoted in Margaret Anne Doody, Frances Burney: The Life in the Works (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.154.

23. Balderston, ed., Thraliana, I, p.393.

24. 'Advertisement' to Cecilia, my emphasis.

25. Anon, Harcourt; A Sentimental Novel. In A Series of Letters. By the Authoress of Evelina (Dublin: C.Jackson, 1780). Harcourt differs from Evelina in its widening of correspondents to include male to male letters, allowing a masculine slant on the feelings of a lover. The author tries to reproduce Burney's grasp of the London social whirl, but widens Burney's focus on dress. A wedding at the conclusion obsessively details the lovers' garments, because, 'To be sure you expect from the pen of a female, the dress of the bride and bride-groom' (Volume II, p.112).

Georgina Bouverie's novel, Georgina: or, Memoirs of the Bellmour Family. By a Young Lady (London: Printed for the Author, 1787) was translated into French in 1788 and German in 1790-92. Both translations claimed, erroneously, to be by Frances Burney. See Raven, ed., The English Novel, p.404.

26. Burney was amused by the first meeting with the classical scholar, Dr Francklin:

'is not your Name Evelina, Ma'am? ---'  
 'Dear, no, Sir!' again quoth I, staring harder.  
 'Ma'am', cried he, [. . .] 'I beg your pardon!  
 I had understood your name was Evelina'.  
 & soon after he went away (4 Dec. 1778, EJL III, p.186).

Dr Johnson referred to Burney both as Evelina and Cecilia: "'Come, --- *Evelina* --- come and sit by me'" (23-30 Aug. 1778, EJL III, p.95); "'who shall ail any thing when Cecilia is so near?'" (DL, 4 Jan. 1783, p.228).

27. For Richardson's collaborations with his correspondents, see John Carroll, ed., Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) and

T.C.Eaves and Ben D.Kimpel, Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

28. Monthly Review, LXVII (July 1782), 70.

29. For an account of reading practices in eighteenth-century Britain, see Jacqueline Pearson, Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835. A Dangerous Recreation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Pearson does not, however, consider the consequences of re-reading.

30. Monthly Review, LXVII (Dec. 1782), 453-58; 453.

31. Monthly Review, LXVI (Feb. 1782), 129-31; 129.

32. From 'Library Holdings of Forty Mainstream Novels of 1780s': figures calculated by Chrisopher J.Skelton-Foord, Circulating Fiction: The Novel in British Circulating Libraries of the Romantic Era (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1997), p.209.

33. Burney to Susanna Burney, 28 Oct. 1782, quoted in Doody, Life in the Works, p.150.

34. EJL IV (forthcoming), quoted in Thaddeus, A Literary Life, p.65.

35. European Magazine and London Review, 2 (Sept. 1782), 207-10; 207-208.

36. Critical Review, LVII (June 1784), 473-74; 474.

Monthly Review, LXXI (Aug. 1784), 149.

37. Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de Laclos, 'Critique Littéraire I - Sur Le Roman de: Cecilia', in Œuvres Complètes (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1951), pp.499-521; pp.499-500. Future references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically. All translations are my own.

38. [William Godwin], The Herald of Literature; or, A Review of the Most Considerable Publications That Will Be Made in the Course of the Ensuing Winter. With Extracts (London: J.Murray, 1784), p.93; i. All other references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically.

In addition to Edward Gibbon, William Robertson, and Frances Burney, Godwin 'reviews' works by two anonymous authors, William Hayley, James Beattie, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Thomas Paine, and Edmund Burke.

39. Gregory, A Father's Legacy to His Daughters, p.9.

40. [Frances Burney], Brief Reflections on the Emigrant French Clergy: Earnestly Submitted to the Humane Consideration of the Ladies of Great Britain By the Author of



Evelina and Cecilia (London: T.Caddell, 1793), iii. All other references are to this edition and are given parenthetically.

In Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s, Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1995), Claudia Johnson mentions the text briefly, stating only that this 'one piece of polemical writing' 'align[s] [Burney] with the reaction' (p.15).

41. [Frances Burney], The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1814), eds., Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L.Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). All other references are to this edition and will be given in the text.

42. Completed by Colley Cibber after the death of Sir John Vanbrugh, The Provok'd Husband; or, A Journey to London was considered a risqué production upon its first performance in January 1728. A letter to the Daily Journal of 12 January 1728 expressed indignation at Cibber's alterations and found the play 'intermix'd with Obscenity, Ribaldry, and Nonsense'. Quoted in Judith Milhous and Robert D.Hume, eds., A Register of English Theatrical Documents, Volume II: 1714-1737 (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), p.725.

43. See Metzner, Crescendo of the Virtuoso, especially chapter 4 on 'Paganini and Liszt, Musicians', pp.113-59. Of course, Burney was the daughter of a noted musicologist and the sister of a pianist child prodigy and would have been constantly surrounded both at home and at fashionable musical gatherings by the temperament and lifestyle of the virtuoso musician.

44. In Frances Burney / Dramatist: Gender, Performance, and the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), Barbara Darby further relates the suppression of The Witlings to its content:

Cecilia, Mrs Wheedle and the milliners, Lady Smatter, and Mrs Sapient are confined in various ways --- by finances, the media, or a closet --- that render them incapable of complete self-direction and at the same time expose them to the masculine eye of public scrutiny and evaluation [. . .]. In placing herself in this world of the witlings, where reputations and security are contingent on male authority, [Burney] ironically predicted the fateful suppression of her play by her two daddies (p.40).

45. Cast list for The Woman-Hater quoted in Sabor, ed., Complete Plays I: Comedies, p.192.

46. Frances Burney, The Witlings. A Comedy. By A Sister of the Order (1779), in Sabor, ed., Complete Plays I: Comedies, I. 26-27. All other references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically.

47. Frances Burney, The Woman-Hater. A Comedy. In Five Acts (c.1800), in Sabor, ed., Complete Plays I: Comedies, I. xi. 33-37. All other references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically.

48. British Critic, I (1814), 374-86; 374; 386.

For the publishing history of The Wanderer, see especially: Joyce Hemlow, The History of Fanny Burney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp.337-40; and Farrar Thaddeus, Frances Burney: A Literary Life, chapter 8, pp.148-79.

49. Quarterly Review, XLIX (April 1833), 106-107.



## Notes to Chapter V

1. Germaine de Staël à Rousselin de Saint-Albin, 18 mai, 1807, in Madame de Staël, Correspondance Générale Tome VI: De Corinne vers De l'Allemagne, 9 novembre 1805 - 9 mai 1809, ed., Béatrice W.Jasinski (Paris: Klincksieck, 1993), p.150.

2. The Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, Barrister-At-Law, FSA, ed., Thomas Sadler, II vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1872), I, pp.347-48; 1st March 1820.

3. Joanne Wilkes, Lord Byron and Madame de Staël: Born for Opposition (Aldershot, UK and Brookfield, USA: Ashgate, 1999), p.196. Wilkes contends that de Staël only addresses women writers 'briefly' in 'An Essay on Fictions' (1795) and Considérations sur la Révolution Française (1818). As I will reveal in this chapter, this assessment is far from accurate.

4. Henry Crabb Robinson, ed., Sadler, I, p.92; German diary 1804.

5. Wilkes claims that de Staël's 'overall response to [Rousseau's] arguments in Letter to M.d'Alembert is one of enthusiastic endorsement for his relegation of the private sphere', Lord Byron and Madame de Staël, p.30.

Mary Seidman Trouille's analysis of the relationship between Rousseau and de Staël in the Lettres sur Rousseau is far more alert to the nuances of the Staëlian response to Rousseauvian texts: 'Staël successfully launched her career with the Lettres sur Rousseau', Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers Read Rousseau (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p.296.

For other differing views on the Lettres, see the special issue of Cahiers staëliens, XLII (1990-91) on de Staël's early writings, especially Monika Bosse's article, '«Ce hasard qui m'entraîna dans la carrière littéraire»: Les lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J.J.Rousseau', 29-47.

6. [Mary Wollstonecraft], review of translation of Letters on the Works and Character of J.J.Rousseau, Analytical Review, IV (1789), 360-62; 360, in Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, eds., The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1989), VII, pp.136-37.

7. [Germaine de Staël], Lettres sur les Écrits et le Caractère de J.J.Rousseau (1788), in [Auguste de Staël, ed.,] Œuvres Complètes de Madame la Baronne de Staël, (Paris: Treuttel and Würtz, 1820-21), XVII vols., I, pp.3-4. All other references to the works of Germaine de Staël will be to this edition, except where otherwise stated. Volume and page number will be given parenthetically in the chapter, where this text will be referred to as OC. All translations are my own, except where otherwise stated.

8. Cousin D'Avalon, Staëlliana, Recueil D'Anecdotes, Bons Mots, Maximes, Pensées et Réflexions de Madame la Baronne de Staël-Holstein, enrichi de notes de quelques pièces

inédites de cette femme célèbre (Paris: Librairie Politique, 1820), p.194.

9. [Francis Jeffrey], review of the republished edition of De la Littérature, Edinburgh Review, XXI (1813), 1-50; 50.

10. The work of Susan Tenenbaum on de Staël's political thought provides the best analysis of the ambiguities and tensions in Staëlian theory. See especially: 'Liberal Heroines: Madame de Staël on the «woman question» and the modern state', Annales Benjamin Constant, V (1985), 37-52 and 'Staël: Liberal Political Thinker', in Madelyn Gutwirth, Avriel Goldberger and Karyna Szmurlo, eds., Germaine de Staël: Crossing the Borders (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp.159-63.

See also John Claiborne Isbell, 'Le Contrat Social selon Benjamin Constant et Madame de Staël, ou la liberté a-t-elle un sexe?', Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études Françaises, XLVIII (1996), 439-56 for de Staël's literal forays into political life through the career and writings of her lover Constant.

11. Claude Dulong, 'From Conversation to Creation', in Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge, eds., A History of Women in the West: III. Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 1993), pp.395-419; p.419.

12. Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, De l'Esprit des Lois (1748), eds., Anne M.Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Part I, Chapter X: On the domestic tribunal among the Romans, pp.105-106. This edition is a reprint of the 1758 English translation.

13. Edinburgh Review, II (1803), 172-77; 176-77. 'Mr Colqhoun' refers to the city magistrate of London from 1792-1818, Patrick Colquhoun, who also wrote treatises on poor relief and social policy.

14. Edinburgh Review, II (1803), 175; 172.

15. On the politically-directed response to Delphine in early nineteenth-century France, see: Simone Balayé, 'Delphine de Madame de Staël et la presse sous le Consulat', Romantisme, LI (1986), 38-47.

16. Edinburgh Review, XI (1807-1808), 183-95; 194. Review of the French edition of Corinne.

17. Germaine de Staël, Corinne ou l'Italie (Paris, 1807) ed., Simone Balayé (Paris: Gallimard, 1985). All references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the chapter.

18. Edinburgh Review, XI (1807-1808), 194-95.

19. For a vastly different view of the relationship between Napoleon and de Staël, which concentrates on her demands that the Emperor return her family fortune, see: Henri



Guillemin, Madame de Staël et Napoléon, ou Germaine et le Caïd Ingrat (Brienne: Panorama, 1966). In Guillemin's rather fictionalized analysis, de Staël appears as an unintentionally comic character who whines perpetually about her 'millions' (p.210).

In The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), Carla Hesse presents excellent evidence that as early as 1796, under the Directoire government, de Staël was considered a threat to national stability: 'wary of her inordinate political influence, [they] issued an *arrêt* to have her deported without judgment as a foreigner on French soil' (pp.64-65).

20. Germaine de Staël, Considérations sur la Révolution Française (Paris, 1818), ed., Jacques Godechot (Paris: Tallandier, 1983), p.374. All other references will be to this edition, which is based on the original manuscript, rather than the revised text published in the Œuvres Complètes by Auguste de Staël in 1820-21 and will be referred to as CRF.

21. Germaine de Staël, Dix Années d'Exil (1821), translated as Ten Years of Exile by Avriel H.Goldberger (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), p.16. All other references will be to this edition, which is the most complete available in either French or English, and it will be referred to as DA in the chapter. In similar fashion to the Considérations, this is the edition originally prepared by de Staël. Her son cuts many passages in the Œuvres Complètes (XV) most of which, interestingly, detail Napoleon's use of censorship and also removes any reference to de Staël's falling-out with Talleyrand, after his hints to Napoleon about de Staël's possibly dangerous politics.

22. For an exhaustive, but essentially narrative account of the people and places Germaine de Staël visited during the time she spent in England between June 1813 and May 1814, see: Robert Calvin Whitford, 'Madame de Staël's Literary Reputation in England', University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, IV (1918), 1-62.

Extracts from the diaries and letters of Albertine, Germaine de Staël's teenage daughter, who accompanied her mother to England, are reproduced in: Norman King, 'Le séjour en Angleterre (1813-1814)', chapter 5 of Simone Balayé, Les Carnets de Voyage de Madame de Staël. Contribution à la Genèse de ses Oeuvres (Genève: Droz, 1971), pp.354-406.

23. Edinburgh Review, XI (1807-1808), 193.

24. King, 'Le Séjour en Angleterre', p.366.

25. Drakard's Paper, 13th June 1813, 182; 27th June, 200.

26. Edinburgh Review, XXI (1813), 1-50; 50; 2-3.

27. In Literary Magazines and British Romanticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Mark Parker claims that during the Regency the Edinburgh Review 'boasted circulations of 12,000 to 14,000 [copies]' (p.8).

28. Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, 16th May 1813, in Christina Colvin, ed., Maria

Edgeworth: Letters from England 1813-1844 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.49.

29. Examiner, 25th July 1813, 475; Gentleman's Magazine, LXXXIII (July 1813), 40. I quote from the former given that it would probably have appeared before the latter, as a weekly Sunday publication, and given that the latter periodical was fond of lifting articles verbatim from other magazines and papers. Especially, it seems, where Germaine de Staël was concerned. Its review of De l'Allemagne in the November and December issues of 1813 was copied directly from The Times.

30. King, 'Le Séjour en Angleterre', pp.363-64.

31. Examiner, 26th December 1813, 827.

32. Maria Edgeworth to Mrs Edgeworth, September 1818, in Colvin, ed., Letters from England, pp.96-97.

33. Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, Château de Coppet, 28th September 1820, in Christina Colvin, ed., Maria Edgeworth in France and Switzerland: Selections from the Edgeworth Family Letters (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p.253. In the Introduction, Colvin claims that Edgeworth's jealousy was precisely because de Staël 'was a greater lion than Maria', xxiv.

34. Edinburgh Review, XI (1813), 424-32; 425.

35. Quarterly Review, X (1813-1814), 355-409; 355; 356.

36. Stanley Jones, Hazlitt: A Life. From Winterslow to Frith Street (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.128.

P.P.Howe, the editor of Hazlitt's Complete Works (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1930-34), also makes this claim in a note to the articles: 'They are largely made up [ . . . ] of extracts of the Lectures on English Philosophy, delivered in the spring of 1812, and not otherwise published by Hazlitt', XX: Miscellaneous Writings, p.400. All other references to Hazlitt's writing will be to this edition of the Complete Works, which will be cited CW, followed by the volume number, in the chapter.



## Notes to Afterword

1. Germaine de Staël, De l'Allemagne (1813), in Auguste de Staël, ed., Œuvres Complètes de Madame la Baronne de Staël (Paris: Treuttel and Würtz, 1820-21), XVII volumes, XI, p.214.
2. Thomas Carlyle, 'Schiller, Goethe and Madame de Staël', Fraser's Magazine (1832), reprinted as Appendix II.ii, in The Works of Thomas Carlyle, XXVI: Critical and Miscellaneous Essays I, ed., H.D.Traill (London: Chapman and Hall, 1905), 502-12; 503.
3. Byron's Letters and Journals, XII volumes, ed., Leslie A.Marchand (London: John Murray, 1975-1982), III, p.238.
4. Dedication to Don Juan (1819-1824), in The Major Works, ed., Jerome J.McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 57-72.
5. In The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York: Vintage, 1986/1997) Leo Braudy claims that 'In Europe a personified figure of Fame virtually vanished by the nineteenth century'; see the 'Images of America' between pp.338-39.
6. Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History (1841), in The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume V, ed., H.D.Traill (London: Chapman and Hall, 1907), p.155. Further references will be to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the Afterword.
7. Germaine de Staël, De l'Allemagne, in Œuvres Complètes, XI, p.35.
8. Germaine de Staël, Lettres sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1788), in Œuvres Complètes, I, pp.9-10.

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Lady's Magazine

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